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Geographies of Desire: (Re)Mapping Black LGBTT Life in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

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Geographies of Desire: (Re)Mapping Black LGBTT Life in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

by

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Dedication

For Pop Pop,

You taught me more about what it means to be myself than you will ever know.

Rest in Peace.

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First and foremost, this project is indebted to the Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and travesti community of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. It is because of their trust, vulnerability, and willingness to share stories and be in community with me that I have been able to write my master's thesis with such passion and purpose. My time spent with Coletivo das Liliths, De Transs Pra Frente, Casarão da Diversidade, and other Black and LGBTT organizations in Salvador also informed my research practice by holding me accountable to the ongoing fights for racial justice, gender equality, and sexual liberation in the city. This project is also the result of generous financial support from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship.

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Abstract

Geographies of Desire: (Re)Mapping Black LGBTT Life in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

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Tracing Black LGBTT Bahian memory and being throughout Salvador da Bahia, this thesis illuminates the multifaceted, and at times contradictory, relationship that non-normative bodies share with the urban landscape. Concerned with the past, present, and future of Black LGBTT Bahian identity, I analyze how desire, a repertoire of sexual, romantic, and platonic practices in consumption and pleasure-making, serves as a through line for the disciplining, delimiting, and (de)construction of the Black LGBTT body across space-time. Comprised of a performative engagement with Salvador's historic center, a (re)mapping of the city's waterfront areas, and an analysis of the experiments in Black futurity and possibility taking place in low-income peripheral neighborhoods, this thesis demonstrates that desire is always at play in determining whether or not non-normative bodies are deserving of space or, under the most extreme circumstances, life. A multimodal ethnography that brings together critical geography, performance studies, and Africana studies, I argue for *geographies of desire* as a conceptual framework to understand how Black LGBTT bodies are read into/out of space in the city. By centering the racial-gendered-sexual treatment of the Black Brazilian body in analyzing the physical and ideological construction of urban space, this work illustrates the global threat that exclusionary planning, global capitalism, and White supremacy pose to the lives and well-being of Black queer and trans folks. This threat to life can only be ameliorated by attending to the myriad spatial, temporal, cultural, and affective anxieties that Black queer and trans bodies are forced to bear for their survival.

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Introduction – *Is My Black Beautiful?* Black Queerness & Transness as Ugliness

> Blessed are the beloved who I
> didn't describe, I couldn't
> describe, will learn to describe
> and respect and love
> Amen.
>
> – Mark Aguhar, *Litanies to my heavenly brown body*

One afternoon in late November of 2017, towards the end of my first semester of graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin, I had the privilege of speaking over the phone with Jaime Cortez, artist-scholar and co-creator of *Sexilio*. This comic details the life of Adela Vasquez, a trans woman activist who migrated from Cuba to the United States in 1980. I had read and presented on the comic in my graduate professionalization seminar some weeks earlier with a queer colleague of mine. Unfortunately, the power and complexity of the work was lost on many of my peers; instead of recognizing the use of humor and openness around sexuality as forms of resistance and empowerment for Adela, my classmates insisted that she had been oversexualized, reproducing harmful ideas around the availability of women's bodies.

This prompted me to reach out to Jaime, in part to show my appreciation for his work, but also to deconstruct how some of my peers interpreted *Sexilio*. During our conversation, we ended up talking about his work, my research, and ways of storytelling that capture the multifaceted nature of queer and trans people of color's lives. At one point in the conversation, I told him that for my thesis project, I would like to do work on how desire is constituted in relation to Black bodies. When we got off the phone, I sent him an article by writer and transgender activist, Janet Mock, on *pretty privilege* that exposed me to the timeliness of this topic (Mock, 2017a). His response, however, made me completely reevaluate the way in which future conversations on desirability need to be approached:

> Talking about ugliness is even more taboo. Talking about being ugly is rarely discussed because it is too abject, too much of an admission of defeat against standards of beauty, or even more disturbingly, that anti-ugly biases might come from a place deeper than culture, and we may have in us a primordial craving for beauty, and aversion to whatever falls too far short of beauty. (Email exchange, November 20, 2017)

I began to ruminate over my own relationship to ugliness, on how ugliness had, whether by force or self-loathing, come to inhabit my body. From friends in middle school making fun of the size of my nose, to my mother conditioning the femininity out of my mannerisms, I have been made to feel ugly. Sometimes, these feelings of ugliness were so strong that I found myself undeserving of life. While I have grown to love myself, I realize that so much of that love is predicated on feeling beautiful. Whether it is through likes and comments on my social media posts or receiving personal affirmations of my appearance, I too crave beauty and fear falling anywhere outside of it.

In thinking of how ugliness is intrinsically linked to Black queerness and transness, I immediately think back to Ashon Crawley's *Kim Burrell and Feeling Ugly*, a blog post in response to a homophobic sermon delivered by Burrell that resurfaced in 2017 on the heels of Shirley Caesar's internet fame:

> With such preaching, blackqueer folks are supposed to be made to endure and carry an ugliness we did not make. I want to think about the ugliness we did not make but are told to carry – that we often refuse to carry – without pathologizing those that find such ugliness impossible to bear but with no place to take it. (Crawley, 2017)

Ugliness as a metonymy for Black queerness and transness is a result of violent anxieties around our bodies, anxieties that we have been taught to carry but are not of our own design. As with my mother policing my femininity, whether out of fear for my safety or a fervent belief that feminine energy in a Black "male" body must be eradicated at all costs, expressions of Black

queerness and transness contest normative constructions of Black masculinity and femininity.[1] At best, these anxieties around Black queerness and transness are a concern for our safety. But at worst, they become justifications for assaults on our bodies, sometimes resulting in our deaths.

I became privy to how desire could turn deadly for Black queer and trans folk during *The Breakfast Club* scandal, where comedian Lil Duval nonchalantly stated that he would kill a trans woman if he ended up being "tricked" into sleeping with her (Mock, 2017b). While this deplorable justification of trans women's deaths is all too familiar, something about this particular interview ignited a rage within me that I had never felt before. The publicness of his assertion, the casual cosigning laughter of the hosts, and the simple fact that this conversation took place days before yet another Black trans woman, TeeTee Dangerfield, had been murdered in cold blood all contributed to my disgust (Michelson, 2017). But what upset me the most was the implication that Black trans women, and other Black queer and trans folk, could be considered so deceitful and repulsive as to not be deserving of life, to the point where others can consider queerness and transness as assaults on their own bodies, thereby rebranding hate crimes as self-defense.

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My first trip to Bahia in 2012 left me enamored and starry-eyed. As a child, I exclusively grew up in predominately-white environments (except for weekend visits to my dad's house in Oakland, California), so living in a place where everyone looked like me was something I yearned for. I fell so in love with Bahia that I spent the majority of undergrad planning my return. After being awarded the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship in 2015, that dream of returning to Bahia became a reality. On June 7, 2016, the day the dorms closed for the trimester at Carleton

[1] For more about the construction of Black masculinity and femininity, see Spillers 1987.

College, I found myself traveling back to Bahia to conduct research for my senior thesis on Black LGBT youth navigating urban space.

But during those three months of fieldwork, my sense of comfort slowly began to fade. The romantic, leisurely image of Bahian life I had fallen in love with was chipped away by loneliness, familial loss, and queer/transphobic violence. Two events in particular, the Orlando nightclub shooting and the death of Leonardo Moura (Moreno, 2016), impacted me so profoundly that I did not even realize I was hurting. While I did not know Leonardo or anyone who was murdered in the Orlando shooting, both acts were a message that queer and trans spaces were no longer safe, if they ever were to begin with, for Black and Brown people. As a result, I became more closed off: I would not leave my apartment on weekends, slept 10 to 12 hours a day, and rarely found the energy to cook for myself. It wasn't until I had a conversation with my best friend that I understood how, despite my lack of personal connection to these incidents, this violence had impacted my body and psyche. From both of these devastating events to the trauma shared with me during interviews, I found myself carrying, as Crawley says, an ugliness that was not my own, nor that of my friends who shared their trauma with me, nor that of those who lost their lives in wanton acts of violence against Black and Brown, queer and trans bodies.

My way of coping with this was to focus my senior thesis on Black LGBT resistance, to show that despite (or at times, in spite of) the violence that surrounds them, Black LGBT Brazilian youth create radical modes of existing in Salvador. I focused on pleasure via Black aesthetics and partying as ways in which Black LGBT youth found love in themselves and each other, thus remapping spaces that had (and continue to be) violent towards them (Reason, 2018). While I still find this to be true, my emphasis on the Black aesthetic and partying as modes of resistance failed to interrogate pretty privilege. What happens to those queers that fall too short of beauty, or those

trans folk who aren't *passing*, or even those who do not wish to pass? What happens to the male-identifying femme who breaks away from masculine aesthetic modes, but still dares to identify as male? What happens to the studs who, despite embracing and embodying their own forms of womanhood, are told they are not real women? These are the voices that I center in this thesis project.

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"*Geographies of Desire:* (Re)mapping Black LGBTT Life in Salvador da Bahia" is a geographic performance ethnography that contextualizes urban development through the experiences of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and travesti (LGBTT) Brazilians living in Salvador da Bahia across space-time. More specifically, I am interested in how, despite being relegated to the margins by the local government and its beneficiaries, Black LGBTT folks have carved out space for themselves in the past, present, and future of the city. A multimodal geographic ethnography that draws from Africana Studies, Performance Studies, Black Transfeminism, and Black Geographies, this project shows how Black LGBTT Brazilians contest and (re)construct Salvador to reflect their own understandings of space-time, leading to more robust ways of knowing how non-normative bodies move throughout the city. Ultimately, I hope to propose a vision of Salvador in which Black LGBTT bodies, their labors, and their practices in survival are centered as viable correctives to the white, heteropatriarchal voyeurism that the current politics of space engenders.

My argument, on the most basic level, is that desire (sexual, platonic, romantic, etc.) maps onto space in ways that determine who is/isn't deserving of access to that space. In other words, Black LGBTT bodies are evaluated based on their proximity to the standards of desirability wherever they are, and as such are granted or denied access to exist freely. These denials often

come in the form of policing, both by civilians and official security officers, or via other acts of anti-Black, misogynistic, and/or LGBTT-phobic violence. This sort of spatial analysis is crucial in that it allows for nuanced readings of space (e.g. how proximity to/performance of femininity impacts Black gay men's ability to access "queer-friendly" locations of the city) while also contributing to a macro-analysis of Salvador as a city that permits certain forms of gender and sexual difference while eradicating others. Adding to discussions on homonormativity and homonationalism (Puar, 2007), I aim to show that Black LGBTT Bahians serve one essential purpose for the city, state, and nation: bolstering the economies of sex and consumption via sex tourism and the performance of Black gender and sexuality. Anything falling too short of this purpose becomes marked for dead.

GEOGRAPHY, ARCHIVES, AND PERFORMANCE: NOTES ON THEORY AND METHOD

This project is, first and foremost, a form of care work done in community with Black LGBTT Bahians. It is a labor of love that started in 2012 and has continued beyond my research trips and graduate study. *Geographies of Desire* primarily draws from a year of fieldwork, nine months conducted in 2018 as a Fulbright researcher and three months conducted in 2019 via generous funding from the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. While my intent was solely to map the locations where Black LGBTT Bahians felt most comfortable or uncomfortable with their race, gender, and sexuality within the city, I was inevitably compelled by other ways of knowing how race, gender, and sexuality impact the lifeworlds of Black LGBTT Bahians. Amidst my geographic work, performance, embodiment, and archives all proved to be salient loci for understanding how Black LGBTT Bahians see themselves in relation to the urban landscape. It is from these points of thematic, theoretical, and methodological departure that my analysis takes shape.

Black, Queer, Feminist Geographies

Recent work in the field of critical geography has highlighted how race, class, gender, and sexuality coalesce and impact the lifeworlds of Black queer and trans folks throughout the diaspora. Taking up Natalie Oswin's call for queer geographies to "bring questions of race, colonialism, geopolitics, migration, globalization and nationalism to the fore" (2008, p. 90), my project considers how Black LGBTT Bahians not only resist impositions on their geographic possibilities, but also respond to, live in spite of, and parody the various forms of domination deployed to control them. To accomplish this goal requires a critical engagement with Black queer geographies, Black feminist geographies, and geographies of non-normative genders and sexualities. As Melissa Wright (2010) states in her critique of feminist and queer geographies, interdisciplinarity is critical to conducting geographic work that represents life beyond stringent categories of difference.

In their two-part special issue, *Gender and sexual geographies of blackness*, co-editors Marlon Bailey and Rashad Shabazz attend to the abuse and exploitation of Black gender and sexual minorities via the "discursive, social, sexual labor" that they are expected to perform for white, cisgender, and heterosexual majorities amidst various forms of physical violence, shaming, and erasure (Bailey and Shabazz, 2014a, p. 318). To attend to the racial-gender-sexual treatment of this community, the authors offer *anti-black heterotopias* as not only an extension of Foucault's theory of heterotopias, but a necessary intervention in the fields of critical geography, Black studies, and queer studies:

> "Anti-black heterotopias expose how race, gender, and sexuality are expressed and constituted in and through spatial landscapes, while highlighting how black gender and sexual minorities' subjection to public ridicule and violence [comprise] their essential function in the overall erotic economy" (Bailey and Shabazz, p. 318).

With its attention to various parts of the African diaspora and engagement with Black gender and sexuality beyond the binaries of gay-straight and man-woman, *Gender and sexual geographies of blackness* is perhaps the most successful attempt at spatializing desire. Most relevant for understanding the analysis to come is Erica Lorraine Williams's article on sex work, tourism, and the politics of space in Praça da Sé, a site in the historic center of Salvador that is constantly being (re)defined by the military police, tourists, and Bahians. While her work is focused on cisgender Black women, her reading of their relationship to the touristic landscape as queer, "due to the fact that they are always already seen as sexually deviant or somehow out of place," is useful for thinking through how assumptions around sexual availability, violability, and deviance structure the material and ideological landscape of Salvador (Williams, 2014, p. 456). Williams's work demonstrates that the historic center of Salvador is a space produced in relation to queerness: as non-normative sexual practice, as fluidity of gender identity and expression, and as a metonymy for nonbelonging. My conceptualization of geographies of desire, however, is most indebted to the theoretical work of Katherine McKittrick and Dora Silva Santana, given their particular emphases on Black (trans)femininity for understanding how the desire for Black (trans)feminine bodies produces and is produced by structures of violence that impact the geographic possibilities of Black subjects.

Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* has come to define the field of Black geography. Dedicated to working through "the historical spatial unrepresentability of black femininity" (2006, xxv), McKittrick offers *demonic grounds* as a theoretical interconnection between human geography, black studies, and black feminism that speaks to, rather than organizes and restricts, the spatial worlds of Black people. Throughout the book, McKittrick references the racial-sexual terrain that shapes Black women's

geographies, a structuring of space that attends to the inextricable ties between colonial domination (e.g. transatlantic slavery) and Black geographies. By rooting her argument in what Black women's geographies can tell us about global systems of domination and the racial-gendered-sexual structuring of space, McKittrick positions Black femininity as a reconceptualization of the human:

> "Black women's geographies and poetics challenge us to stay human by invoking how black spaces and places are integral to our planetary and local geographic stories and how the question of seeable human differences puts spatial and philosophical demands on geography. These demands site the struggle between black women's geographies and geographic domination, suggesting that more humanly workable geographies are continually being lived, expressed, and imagined." (McKittrick, 2006, p. 146).

More than a case study that explicates Black women's relationship to space, McKittrick argues for Black women's geographies as a humanist corrective to dominant spatial configurations that attempt to exploit, violate, and make invisible Black feminine subjects. While not explicitly focused on Black transfeminine individuals, McKittrick's characterization of Black women's navigation of and resistance to global systems of power as practices in humanism guide my own reading of the Black LGBTT narratives to come.

Centering Black transfeminism in my analysis of Black LGBTT spatiality, I take up one of the critical questions that Dora Silva Santana poses at the beginning of her article on articulations of Black trans sisterhood in Rio de Janeiro: "What can the embodied experiences of black *travestis*/trans women/transsexuals in Brazil tell us about the ways black bodies are imagined, gendered, sexualized, and racialized locally but also connect with a broader experience in the African diaspora?" (2019, p. 210). She succinctly captures this shared, embodied knowledge in the term *mais viva*, a self-awareness that is bred from both recognizing the routine violence that Black trans folks endure and the resistive, fugitive practices in self-preservation and community care

work they perform for one another in the wake of such violence (Santana, 2019, p. 216). *Geographies of Desire*, as I alluded to earlier, is constituted through several networks of care: between myself and the folks I interviewed, between Black LGBTT Bahians living in proximity to one another, and between the Black LGBTT living and the Black LGBTT dead. In fashioning geographies of desire from a place of accountability to and reverence for these intimate care networks, I provide a meeting place for McKittrick and Santana's theorizations on humanism, Black (trans)femininity, survival, and diaspora, connecting the experiences of Black LGBTT Bahians to the racial-gendered-sexual structuring of space worldwide.

Memory, Archives, and the Afterlives of Slavery

This project is haunted by the ghost of chattel slavery; while focusing primarily on the lives of Black LGBTT Bahians in the present, it is imperative that any conversation about Blackness, gender, and sexuality in the diaspora acknowledge the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This legacy is even more crucial to my project in that the history of Portuguese colonialism has structured the built environment in Salvador da Bahia, both regarding architecture and the spatial layout of the city. As such, an engagement with literature on the afterlives of slavery in the Americas makes possible the multisite, cross-temporal reading of the city that is to come.

In her monograph about Black women's intimate lives in New York and Philadelphia, Hartman deftly localizes Black gender and sexuality in the slum, the ghetto, and other iterations of the low-income Black neighborhood. Focusing her archival analysis on unruly Black women, gender benders, and sexual deviants, Hartman fashions a narrative of the Great Migration that privileges those living outside of Black middle-class respectability. In an effort to take up this work in my reading of Black LGBTT spatiality, I juxtapose the "expected" spaces of LGBTT encounter (e.g. bars, clubs, and beaches) with the low-income neighborhoods of the city. Like

Hartman, I believe that turning to the low-income Black neighborhood, and the experiments in Black gender and sexuality that are happening there, will lead us towards a culture of humanness, transnational solidarity, and racial-gender-sexual freedom.

In her creative analysis of sexual violence during chattel slavery, Christina Sharpe explores how contemporary works of art, film, and literature grapple with the afterlives of slavery. Through this analysis, Sharpe coins the term *monstrous intimacies,* "a set of known and unknown performances and inhabited horrors, desires and positions produced, reproduced, circulated, and transmitted, that are breathed in like air and often unacknowledged to be monstrous" (2010, 3). In attending to the codified, scripted-as-romance intimacies of chattel slavery, Sharpe demonstrates the prevalence of rape, sexual humiliation, and domination in the lives of Black folks across the diaspora. My problematization of desire builds upon Sharpe's theorization of monstrous intimacies in that I attend to the assumed sexual, cultural, and affective availability of Black LGBTT Bahians.

In a similar vein, Vincent Woodard's monograph on consumption and homoeroticism is a unique text that works through the heavily-codified, multifaceted vocabulary of consumption used during U.S. slavery. From slave owners raping enslaved men and boys to cannibalism, Woodard positions various archival and literary cases of consuming enslaved Africans as evidence that, "the personal plight of the Negro is part of a larger homoerotic master narrative of colonial conquest and male desire" (2014, 14). While both Sharpe and Woodard provide generative readings about the centrality of sex and sexuality in colonial domination tactics, Woodard's attention to homoeroticism adds another layer to the "unknown performances" of monstrosity that Sharpe refers to above. While my project deals with consumption more abstractly, I continue Woodard's work by considering what might be said about the Black LGBTT Bahian past, even if formal archives and official memories obscure that past.

Lamonte Aidoo takes up similar questions on race, gender, and sexuality in the Brazilian context. Drawing from national archives and Brazilian literature, Aidoo locates same-sex sexual abuse as one of the many silences around chattel slavery that the Brazilian nation uses to uphold the myth of racial democracy (2018, 6). His nuanced reading of Brazil's silences as a gradient of sameness and difference, rather than a strict racial-sexual divide, is useful in locating the aforementioned works within a Brazilian context. How can a city like Salvador da Bahia, for example, be structured around white pleasure and referred to as *Black Mecca* in the same breath? Aidoo reveals that these seemingly contradictory readings of space in Brazil are intentional, mediated forms of domination meant to uphold the myth of racial democracy.

This project, however, is most directly in conversation with Black feminist anthropologist Christen Smith, whose analysis of police brutality in Salvador da Bahia has shaped my own understandings of geography, memory, and embodiment. Framing her descriptions of psychological and physical violence throughout the city with a grassroot organization's public performances, Smith expertly outlines the simultaneous celebration of Blackness and destruction of the Black body in Salvador, a regulation of Black bodies and culture that she poses as emblematic of *Afro-paradise* (Smith, 2016). Her attention to the visual resonances of chattel slavery and police brutality, embodied responses to psychological trauma, and the weaponization of dead Black bodies all influence my own analysis of the racial-gendered-sexual structuring of Salvador.

Performance Ethnography and Oral History

Over the past few decades, performance studies scholars have worked diligently to study performance beyond the stage, "validating and considering oral culture as performance to be an alternative site of knowledge" (Conquergood, 2013, 7). By considering how the intersections of

race, gender, and sexuality shape both quotidian and staged performances, performance studies have expanded notions of what socially-committed, rigorous intellectual work can look like. In this project, I consider how staged performance, the daily lives of Black LGBTT folks, and performative spatial interventions all shape/are shaped by overlapping conceptualizations of space. In an effort to situate these performances as resonant with those across the African diaspora, I have identified several key performance scholar-practitioners that attend to the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and nation in their work.

In his performance ethnography on ballroom culture in Detroit, Marlon Bailey situates the house structure and balls as spaces of self-making, care work, political advocacy, and Black gender and sexuality. For Bailey, the ball is a cultural form through which Black LGBT people "withstand the social, political, and economic marginalization and exclusion with which they are confronted" (2013, 16). As participant observer in the ballroom scene, belonging to and walking with the very house through which he conducts his ethnography, Bailey evinces how cultural and emotional labor can yield rigorous intellectual work. While I did not act in the performance analyzed in Chapter One, the depth of the relationship I have developed and sustained with the performance collective mirrors that of Bailey's relationship with The Legendary House of Prestige, giving me access to a level of candor, transparency, and intimacy that a typical audience member would not receive.

Similarly, Renée Alexander Craft's performance-centered ethnography of the Congo tradition in Panama poses key interventions in Black diasporic performance studies. A scholar-practitioner as well, Craft positions herself as co-performer in the Congo tradition; while Craft does not participate directly in the tradition, she constitutes the performance as both a scholar and community partner. Furthermore, Craft ends her ethnography by analyzing several of her own

performances and installations based in her fieldwork, honoring the creative influence and diasporic resonances that the Congo tradition presents. Her reflections on the personal and transnational implications of performance is in direct conversation with my own project, as I consider how staged performances of Black LGBTT life, quotidian negotiations of space, and public performative interventions lay bare the racial-gendered-sexual structuring of the city.

A canonical exploration of Latin American performance, Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* demonstrates the interplay between staged performance and quotidian life as it relates to trauma, silence, and collective identity. For Taylor, performance consists of "vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated [behavior]" (2003, 2). Like Craft and Bailey, Taylor characterizes performance as an embodied epistemological site of cultural memory, archival storage, and meaning-making. In attending to the sensorial, visceral ways in which we experience culture, Taylor facilitates an engagement with performance that privileges the myriad worldmaking practices of marginalized populations. By putting this work in conversation with Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, Lamonte Aidoo, Vincent Woodard, and Christen Smith, I position the afterlife of slavery as a repertoire of actions in disciplining the Black LGBTT body, as well as the resonances in our agentive responses to these impositions on our lives, freedoms, and transitions between space, time, and identifications.

In a different vein, yet towards the same ends, E. Patrick Johnson's oral history of Black queer southern women runs parallel to my own research praxis. Dedicated to "bearing witness to these others who are not so other," Johnson curated this project in response to silences around the ways that Black southern women practice their gender and sexuality, both individually and amongst one another (2018, 17). Employing a Black feminist praxis in his methodological approach, Johnson creates an oral history "in which the researcher emphasizes empathy,

collaboration, intersubjectivity, and a sharing of the emotional labor to tell the story" (12). This transference of pain, labor, and care is essential to my (re)telling of the various stories that make up this work. In this sense, *Geographies of Desire* is a labor of love that has required, and continues to require, me to position myself as/with the Black LGBTT Bahians whose stories and creative visions I have the privilege to share.

LANGUAGE, TRANSLATION, AND THE POLITICS OF NAMING

Engaging in a thorough exploration of Black gender and sexuality in Salvador da Bahia requires an understanding of sociolinguistics and LGBTT politics in Brazil. Throughout this project, I elect to use the acronym LGBTT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and travesti) because it best encompasses the category of folks that I was able to interview for this project. As with the quote that opens the introduction, I honor and respect the genderqueer, pansexual, intersex, disabled, and other folks that this project unfortunately does not speak sufficiently to or about. I hope that this project encourages other scholars and activists to take up socially oriented, politically engaged research on these populations in the future. That said, I occasionally use the terms LGBTQ+ and queer to refer to either a) the broader LGBTQ+ movement and community in Brazil, or b) the Black queer and trans diaspora across the Americas. My terminological commitments stem from the fervent belief that researchers should be as specific as possible when naming communities, remaining careful not to generalize the experiences of individuals or subsets of the community in an attempt to theorize the whole of gender and sexuality.

Similarly, this project is meticulous in its naming of individuals. Even when pseudonyms are used, for all the mapping interviews and in select cases where the interlocutor asked not to be named, I maintain names and pronouns that accurately represent the gender identities and expressions of those interlocutors. For example, there are times when I use *they* to refer to a non-

binary performer in the theater collective analyzed in Chapter One, a gesture that honors their lack of identification with gender even though they present as masculine in their day-to-day life. While many Latin Americanist scholars debate the use of supposedly Western constructs of gender and sexuality in the region (Pelúcio, 2014; Lanuza and Carrasco, 2015), I find it unfortunate that these debates are leveraged to strip folks of their right to be named in ways that are empowering and genuine to their identifications. Whenever possible, I use the exact terms that my interlocutors used to refer to themselves, maintaining and explaining the Portuguese word for their identities if there is no satisfactory translation.

In an effort to contextualize the resonances in Black gender and sexuality across the African diaspora that appear in this project, I mention figures, cultural phenomenon, and terms used within the Black community in the United States. Translational work often obfuscates the cultural richness of Black queer and trans communities by forcing our aesthetic and communicatory practices to be filtered through dominant (read: White, cisgender, heteropatriarchal) understandings of race, gender, sexuality, and nation. Rather than a pure translation of Black LGBTT Bahian life, I provide parallel readings of the cultural production, political engagements, and threats to life that are experienced by Black queer and trans people in Brazil and the United States, as this is the site of my own worldmaking and from where I produce this work. Transnational solidarity lies not only in the direct actions taken to protect life and freedom, but also in recognizing our resonant practices in creation and survival across borders.

BLACK LGBTT VISIONS OF THE CITY

This project traces Black LGBTT Bahian memory and being throughout the physical and cultural landscapes of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Bringing together performance, archives, digital mapping, and ethnography, I demonstrate how desire simultaneously haunts and facilitates a Black

LGBTT sense of place within the city. While each chapter is anchored in the present, they engage with various aspects of Salvador's past, present, and future in order to evince the importance of Black LGBTT lives in fashioning the city as we know it today. I argue that a Black LGBTT perspective of the city is essential for understanding how colonialism, capitalism, heterosexism, and sexual exploitation operate concomitantly to position Black LGBTT Bahian bodies within the city, state, and nation. Furthermore, I present Black LGBTT Bahian cultural work as a corrective to this positioning, offering alternate conceptualizations of space and time that center the subjectivities and worldmaking practices of this community.

In *Blood as Thick as Water*, I analyze *Xica*, the performance of the life and persecution of Brazil's first-known Black travesti. Contextualizing the play with my own experiences in the Brazilian colonial archive, I assert that the recovery of Black LGBTT memory requires a negotiation between embodied knowledge and historical unknowns. I evoke Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, Christen Smith, Diana Taylor, and Lamonte Aidoo in order to evince the racial-gendered-sexual structuring of chattel slavery, a structuring that requires a deeper engagement with non-normative Black genders and sexualities to be fully understood. I close this chapter by reflecting on what *Xica* can tell us of Black LGBTT Bahian life in the present, specifically the affective, cultural, and sensual labors that this population is expected to provide for dominant society.

At the Limits of Desire delves into the conceptual framework for this project, exploring how Black LGBTT geographies are constituted via desirability. Building upon the issues brought up in *Xica*, this chapter analyzes how the expectedness of Black LGBTT labors produces physical space, leading to an intricate determination of what types of bodies are acceptable in the city, where they are acceptable, and how they are to perform in order to remain in situ. After opening with a

description of the Bahian Independence Day parade, and the performances in Black gender and sexuality that take place in the festivities, I analyze the spatial narratives of two Black transfeminine Bahians who have negotiated the complexity of desire within their lives. Drawing primarily from the work of Katherine McKittrick and Dora Silva Santana, I argue that Black (trans)femininity provides a clear example of how Black LGBTT bodies are always assumed available, consumable, and marked for dead. This chapter demonstrates what is at stake in allowing desire to restrict the spatial possibilities of Black LGBTT Bahians.

A Voz do Gueto (*The Voice of the Ghetto*) turns away from traditional LGBTT space to envision an alternative geography of Black LGBTT Bahian identity: the low-income Black neighborhood (*periferia*). Reading the cultural work of a Black Bahian drag queen in tandem with Saidiya Hartman's book on Black women's intimate lives in the Black Belt of the United States, I demonstrate that Black gender and sexuality, and the cultural forms produced by these identities, are indigenous to low-income Black space. In highlighting the transnational resonances of this cultural work, I trace the beginnings of a shift back to these neighborhoods in search of racial equity, gender freedom, and sexual liberation. To conclude, I put the drag queen's work in conversation with the performances in Black gender and sexuality from the previous chapters, discussing the hope that they pose for not only Black LGBTT Bahian futures, but those of Black queer and trans folks across the African diaspora.

More than a case study on Black LGBTT identity in Salvador da Bahia, this project is a transnational investment in equality and justice for minoritarian[2] subjects. As Fannie Lou Hamer stated during her speech at the founding of the National Women's Political Caucus, "nobody's free until everybody's free" (Brooks and Houck, 2010). Black queer and trans people exist at the nexus

[2] My use of minoritarian is largely drawn from José Esteban Muñoz, who uses the term as a meeting place for marginalized peoples that grapple with majoritarian subjects and cultures (Muñoz, 1999).

of many forms of oppression; beyond the identities of race, gender, and sexuality, this community reveals the intimacies of colonialism, capitalism, White supremacy, and other iterations of hegemony. In attending to Black LGBTT practices in resistance and worldmaking, I encourage the exploration of new paths towards freedom, paths that account for the myriad ways that racial, gender, and sexual minorities are envisioning an outside of dominant culture. To stand for and with the folks that appear in this project is to move towards a culture of humanness that celebrates the richness and innovation engendered by social difference.

Chapter One – *Blood as Thick as Water*: (Re)Negotiating the Limits of Black LGBTT Memory

> *Cultural memory is, among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection…Memory is embodied and sensual, that is, conjured through the senses; it links the deeply private with the social, even official, practices. Sometimes memory is difficult to evoke, yet it is highly efficient; it is always operating in conjunction with other memories*… (Taylor, 2007, p. 82)

HEALING IN THE WAKE

I was in Salvador, a little over a month into my Fulbright research year, when my grandpa passed away. I had just seen him some months before, during a wintry visit to Bryn Mar, Pennsylvania with my dad. During that time, my grandpa (or Pop Pop, as my cousins and I would affectionately call him) reminisced on his stint in the army, playing in the Negro Leagues and reconnecting with old family members. Although Pop Pop was 93 years old, hard of hearing and had various dietary restrictions, he was a healthy, mobile man for his age. My Great Aunt Elizabeth, his sister, would often cook for him and check on him throughout the week, occasionally asking him to stay with her instead of in the big, three-story home that my Grandma Clara left him upon her passing ten years earlier. So the thought of him suffering of cardiac arrest, yet remaining functional enough to call the paramedics at a hospital no more than a 5-minute ride away from his house, didn't make sense to me as a cause for death. What I would later find out, from my dad and aunt, is that the paramedics failed to sustain his breathing and blood circulation (beyond his pulse) upon arrival, causing irreparable damage to all four cerebral lobes.

This is not to say that Pop Pop was abandoned in life or death; he had a strong network of friends and family that loved (and continue to love) him. He played pool on the weekends, received regular calls and visits from his kin, watched old westerns on the t.v. and had a cheesy grin on his face every time I saw him. Rather, his passing served as a somber reminder that the Black body is always at risk of falling victim to "the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to

health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment" (Hartman, 2007, p. 6). In other words, what made his passing so unbelievable to me is that despite the fullness of his life, despite the network of care and resources that he had been blessed with, he became another Black person failed by the United States healthcare system. The passing of my Grandma Clara, which happened under similar conditions in the same hospital (albeit more prolonged), further evidences the structural violence that underscores their deaths, and my family's subsequent grief.

During the drive to Pennsylvania for Pop Pop's funeral, my Auntie Iris and I combed through some logistics, particularly who would be present. His funeral would be the first time in a while that I had seen my dad's side of the family, so I was not surprised that many of the names she mentioned were unfamiliar. What did throw me off, however, was the inclusion of four of her siblings (three half-sisters and one half-brother) that I had never met before, and that she had little recollection of until meeting them a week prior. Before marrying my Grandma Clara, Pop Pop had two relationships that led to children. As such, the age gap between these siblings and my dad and Auntie Iris was rather significant, meaning they were rarely around aside from occasionally visiting Pop Pop. While the revelation was not scandalous, and the new aunts and uncle have become welcome additions to our ever-growing circle of family, this did lead me to question how well I knew my grandfather.

What does it mean for my dad, Auntie Iris, myself and my cousins to not have known more than half of Pop Pop's life, a life that remained materially and temporally disjoined from our own until his passing? What ultimately assuaged these feelings of mistrust and unknowing was previewing Pop Pop's corpse with this newfound extended family. During the viewing, I made the mistake of touching Pop Pop's corpse; the juxtaposition of his life-like appearance and the stiff, taxidermy texture of his body broke me. My new older cousin, Tasha, was the first one to console

me, pulling me away from the casket and sitting next to me in the chairs provided for the viewing. She took the opportunity to ask me questions about my life, distracting me from the rush of emotions his touch brought on. Her ability to react so immediately with care, in the midst of our shared grief and unfamiliarity with one another, provided me with a new perspective on the situation: family is a dynamic network of people that care for one another, not an exclusionary structure that determines who is or isn't kin. In other words, I was bogging myself down with questions of blood relation and hierarchies of belonging that would never account for the intimacy being shared in that moment.

I open with this narrative of familial loss for two reasons. The first, and perhaps the most transparent, is that Pop Pop's passing haunted the remainder of my Fulbright year. Honoring his legacy in the opening of this chapter is not only healing work for myself, but an acknowledgement that the circumstances of my life are integral to how/from where I produce my scholarly work. The second is an inheritance from Christina Sharpe's "In the Wake: On Blackness and Being," specifically her comments on the incorporation of the personal within Black diasporic work:

> *I include the personal here to connect the social forces on a specific, particular family's being in the wake to those of all Black people in the wake; to mourn and to illustrate the ways our individual lives are always swept up in the wake produced and determined, though not absolutely, by the afterlives of slavery…I use the personal here in order to position this work, and myself, in and of the wake.* (Sharpe, 2016, p. 8)

In other words, I share Pop Pop's passing with an understanding that it is not spectacular; it is a repetition of centuries of anti-Black structural violence, the afterlives of slavery. What is to be lamented here is not the fact of his death, but rather the circumstances around it: A Black person in his 90s, in relatively good health, living 5 minutes from the hospital, and yet the cause of his death is not even the heart attack itself, but the residual brain damage that could have been avoided with something as simple as CPR and defibrillation. How might viewing Black death not as a

given, but as an avoidable circumstance brought on by a lack of care for the Black body in pain, point to new ways of caring for the Black dead/dying (Sharpe, p. 38)?

Engaging Black (queer) feminist scholars such as Christina Sharpe, Saidiya Hartman and Christen Smith, this chapter interrogates the anti-Black LGBTT structuring of the archive in Salvador, and how *Coletivo das Liliths*, a LGBTT performance collective, refracts the violence of that structuring to make Black LGBTT histories legible as subversively constitutive of the Brazilian nation. The second section details my experience in several public and private archives in Salvador, addressing where, how, and in what state Black LGBTT bodies are expected to be found. The third section details the history and dramaturgical practice of *Coletivo das Liliths*, contextualizing their longest-running performance, *Xica*, within the broader scope of their theatrical repertoire. The fourth positions *Xica* as a performance that reads against the grain of the colonial archive, analyzing the potentials and limitations of staging Black LGBTT life during chattel slavery. The conclusion addresses what the performance of the archive does to simultaneously preserve Black LGBTT memory and prevent the repetition of anti-Black LGBTT violence in the present and future.

THE VIOLENCE OF THE ARCHIVE

I did not intend to do archival research in Salvador. While I had never been to an archive in the city before, my intuition told me that it would be nearly impossible to find the stories and bodies I was looking for. Aside from Salvador's fraught relationship with Blackness (a tossup between "everyone's Black" and "we're all Brazilian," two sides of the same racially-democratic coin), I had become accustomed to hearing that my research was too complicated, too niche to carry out, especially from a historical perspective. But one of my Fulbright colleagues, Vanessa Castañeda, agreed to introduce me to several archivists in Salvador. The first time I went with her,

we accompanied another Fulbright researcher who had an appointment to look through some photographs at the private collections in the Biblioteca Central of Salvador. We met for lunch at "Health Valley," a vegetarian/vegan buffet in the center of the city, and then walked over to the library. Housed on the third floor of the building, this archive was in the midst of being digitize by the director and lead archivist, a slender, Black Bahian man nicknamed Vilas Boas. When I introduced myself and told him about my project, he excitedly mentioned having come across several photos of trans and travesti folks in his digitizing. Equally enthusiastic about the prospects of encountering photographs of LGBTT Brazilians in the archive, I was sure to exchange WhatsApp information with him. However, the lead turned out to be a dud; before he could get around to attending to my project, the archive had to move locations to another part of the building. With only himself and three other staff people, all on a rotating schedule, there was no way that he was going to be able to follow through on his promise. Saddened, but still determined, I continued my search.

The second archive I visited was the *Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador* (Municipal Historic Archive of Salvador), a public archive managed by the Municipal Secretary of Culture and Tourism (SECULT). Vanessa was working with their audiovisual archivist, Elidinei, to find old photographs of the Baianas de Acarajé for her dissertation. Given that my project considers Black LGBTT Bahians' relationship to the urban landscape, I figured that this visit would be an opportunity to find photographs that document physical changes to the city over time. As I looked through the photographs that Elidinei had pulled for me, however, I could not help but notice the looks, gestures and aesthetics they captured (figure 1.1). While the annotations provided spoke solely of the spaces they were meant to describe, I wondered what stories the bodies, and their interactions with one another, would tell if they could speak for themselves? As with Nadia Ellis's

analysis of dandyism as "a metonymy, a sign for a figure and a structure of belonging developed out of class angst and nonnormative eroticized desire," I wondered in what other ways we might read Black LGBTT identity when it is not named as such (2015, p. 96). Careful not to ask too much of the dead (Hartman, 2008, p. 14), I kept these thoughts to myself, though they gave me the courage to ask Elidinei if there were, in fact, photographs of Black LGBTT Bahians in this archive.

Her response, unsurprising yet delivered with care rather than prejudice, was that I should try looking at the photographs from Carnaval. While there is much written about the performance of gender during Carnaval (Trevisan, 1986; Kulick, 1998; Green, 1999; Mitchell, 2016), it is worth noting that cisgender heterosexual men will often wear feminine clothing as their *fantasias* (costumes) during the celebration, an aesthetic gesture meant to mock cis/trans women and travestis. As such, I was hesitant to engage with this section of the archive, but ultimately decided to take Elidinei up on her offer. Of the hundreds of photographs I sifted through, only four were explicitly labeled as "travesti" or "travestis". As expected, the person who labeled the photographs did not distinguish between the men in *fantasias* and actual travestis (figures 1.2 and 1.3, respectively). This folding of identities into one another, specifically one that is meant to mock/violate the other, is a gender violence that is repeated throughout the Brazilian colonial archive. In addition to temporally fixing travestis to the moment of Carnaval, another violence is committed through their positioning alongside these men. Their synonymous labeling and positioning within the archive, paired with this fixity, simultaneously buttresses notions of gender and sexual liberation while reminding us that this freedom has no place in the Brazilian nation beyond Carnaval. In a certain sense, the metonymy of gender and sexual deviance as a way of reading the colonial archive felt more hopeful than dealing directly with those marked as LGBTT.

The last archivist that Vanessa introduced me to was Urano Andrade, a public historian in Salvador who aims to make documents and photographs from the Bahian archive digitally accessible. During a dinner at Vanessa's apartment in Barra, Urano and I discussed how he may be able to help with my project. Despite working independently, Urano has a strong relationship with the *Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia* (Public Archive of the State of Bahia). While digitizing some of their collections in 2015, Urano came across a selection from the Bahian newspaper, *O Alabama*, that mentions a tryst between two Bahian women of mixed race (see figure 1.4).[3] Excited, once again, by the prospect of finding more stories like this, I asked him if I could look through the state archives one day with his guidance. Unfortunately, our schedules did not match up, but he offered to speak with the archivists there in order to facilitate the process more smoothly.

The day I was able to go to the Public Archive, I forgot to wear pants; in order to go into government-owned buildings, men are required to wear pants (jeans will suffice), a shirt with sleeves and close-toed shoes. Since I was already on the bus there when I made the realization, I decided to play the role of the silly American who didn't know any better. Despite some haranguing by the security guard and the other workers, I was eventually granted access. The archivist, an elderly white Brazilian man, instructed me to use the desktop computer to search the collections. By this time, I realized that terms like "lésbica" or "negra" were not keywords that would yield results, so I told the archivist more about my project and asked what terms would be most appropriate for their system. While he was unsure that I would find anything of interest in the Public Archive, he suggested that I start with the police registers. In terms of keywords, he

[3] A note on the newspaper: According to a disclaimer written by the *Governo do Estado da Bahia* (State Government of Bahia), the newspaper ran from 1863 to 1890 and was edited by a group of Black Bahians. The newspaper was described as "oscillating between political satire and lyric-humor," which leads me to question whether or not the entry he found is satire.

recommended that I use terms like "desfloramento" (deflowering) and "homicídio" (homicide). While rape and murder are persistent threats to the lives and well-being of Black LGBTT people, the ease with which he suggested these keywords was unsettling. Not to mention that, when it comes to official police records, gender and sexual difference are often effaced from the narratives provided, unless they are deemed relevant to the crime committed. The options for finding the Black LGBTT body in the archive boiled down to either Carnaval or registers of their death and violation, both of which felt like an "irreparable violence" (Hartman, 2008, 12).

While I found very little that spoke directly to my project, the experience of traversing parts of the Bahian archive revealed a structural violence surrounding memory in Salvador. Even though the city profits off the cultural and affective labor of Black LGBTT Bahians, no formal historical institutions are honoring the history of this community. Despite my limited success of finding LGBTT bodies in the *Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador*, none of the public or private archives that I visited were equipped to attend to the racial aspect of my research. In this sense, Black LGBTT Bahians are not only rendered ahistorical, but their existence is codified as that of pleasure producers (e.g. Carnaval) or victims of corporeal violence. We are tasked, then, with returning to the "what if" of Black LGBTT identity in order to construct a history that honors the legacy of those dissident bodies that the Brazilian nation simultaneously obscures and reinforces itself with.

WE ARE ALL OF LILITH: NOTES ON THE DRAMATURGICAL PRACTICE OF *COLETIVO DAS LILITHS*

My relationship with Coletivo das Liliths began by chance. During my fieldwork in 2016, I meet Inaê, one of the performers in the collective, at a march protesting violence against LGBTT people that took place in Rio Vermelho. After interviewing her for my undergraduate thesis, in which she briefly mentioned Coletivo das Liliths, we kept in touch over social media. When I

came back to Salvador in 2018, I attended *O Circo dos Horrores das Liliths* (hereafter, Circus of Horrors) at *Casa de Artes Sustentáveis*, an artist space and hostel owned by my friend and fellow researcher, Jamie Andreson. A burlesque performance that straddles the lines of camp and grotesque, Circus of Horrors was as aesthetically captivating as it was disturbing. After sitting with the performance for a while, I decided to reach out to Inâe about the possibility of writing about it, to which she replied with the WhatsApp contact of one of the collective's directors, Georgenes. However, what started as curiosity about a jarring burlesque performance turned into a deeper investment in the work of Coletivo das Liliths, specifically their most recent series of performances that rework the colonial archive to make LGBTT Brazilian histories known.

Coletivo das Liliths was formed in 2013 at the Federal University of Bahia's School of Theater. Their name, which translates to "Collective of Liliths," is a reference to the first wife of Adam. According to mixed accounts from a variety of Judeo-Christian religious traditions, Lilith and Adam were created on the same day from the same clay, though Lilith was expected to be subordinate to Adam. Due to her unwillingness to submit, Lilith left the Garden of Eden to live amongst the serpents and demons of the Red Sea. While God called three archangels to bring her back by force, they found Lilith pleased with her new life and were unable to return her to the garden. Some accounts even go so far as to say that Lilith later returned as the serpent in the garden who tempted Eve, making her the harbinger of original sin. *Coletivo das Liliths* evokes her name, in the plural, to establish themselves as the daughters of Lilith.

In an interview that I conducted with Georgenes and Inâe in 2019, I asked them to extrapolate on why they considered Lilith to be their mother, to which Georgenes replied that the myth of her life and persecution runs parallel to that of dissident bodies within Brazil. "*Todos somos das Liliths*" (We are all of Lilith), he declared (Coletivo das Liliths, personal

communication, June 13, 2019). Both in their name and dramaturgical practice, *Coletivo das Liliths* reclaims the positioning of LGBTT bodies within the Brazilian nation, reconceptualizing their persecution as downtrodden, monstrous and sinful by critically embodying these characterizations. Inâe later reminded Georgenes that their name is also in reference to "DasPu," a fashion line started by paulistana[4] sex worker and activist, Gabriela Leite.

Coletivo das Liliths produced their first play, *Lady Lilith*, in 2013 as an homage to Lilith. When I asked about their methodology for creating the play, the collective described it as a foundational example of their commitment to operating "outside of the norm of theater" (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, June 13, 2019). In discussing the base of their methodology, Georgenes was sure to mention that they often create before getting involved in the technical and theoretical aspects of dramaturgy. This leaves a certain space for collaboration and co-creation that traditional approaches to theater do not. While each member of the collective plays a specific role in the formation of each play, these roles rotate based on expertise and the needs of a particular piece. In other words, instead of obsessing over the refinement and professionalism of high theater, *Coletivo das Liliths* commits themselves to an experimental approach to theater invested in communicating thoughts, feelings and historical resonances to the audience.

To make their dramaturgical practice legible to an audience well-versed in theater, Georgenes explained that their performances are most closely aligned with the Theater of Cruelty, a form of French theater created by Henry Becque, but popularized by Antonin Artaud. In *Theater and Its Double*, a collection of manifestos and letters by Artaud, he defines Theater of Cruelty in relation to the senses:

> *Whereas, in the digestive theater of today, the nerves, that is so to say a certain physiological sensitivity, are deliberately left aside, abandoned to the individual anarchy*

[4] *Paulistana* refers to women from São Paulo

> *of the spectator, the Theater of Cruelty intends to reassert all the time-tested magical means of capturing the sensibility.* (Artaud, 1958, p. 125)

In essence, Theater of Cruelty is meant to disrupt and disturb its viewers, existing on the border of fiction and reality in order to create a visceral, delirious reaction to the work. This form of theater allows for *Coletivo das Liliths* to produce a "performative experience" in which the meaning of each piece is not solely in the content of the script, but in the aesthetic and affective production of the story being told. In an attempt to further explain this form of theater as it applies to their performances, Georgenes highlighted three key elements of *Lady Lilith*: 1) a central myth/story/known, 2) mixture of the known and unknown, and 3) the incorporation of contemporary relevance (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, June 13, 2019). Despite changes in theme and source material, variations of this structure can be seen throughout their performance repertoire. In other words, *Coletivo das Liliths* incorporates several layers of storytelling and worldmaking in order to produce theater that (dis)orients the viewer, exposing the audience to a way of knowing the world that they would otherwise miss out on. Returning to their initial refusal to the norms of theater, *Coletivo das Liliths* characterizes this as a practice in ritual, of honoring the dead that have paved the way for dissident bodies like their own to exist in the present day.

Xica, which debuted in January of 2017, marks the second extensive phase of *Coletivo das Liliths's* performance history. The first play in *Trilogia dos Trópicos*[5], a set of performances that provide a space of "reencounter with [their] ancestries" as Brazilians from the Northeast (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, July 12, 2019), *Xica* details the life and persecution of the first known Black travesti trafficked to Bahia during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. *Xica* ran for

[5] Translation: Trilogy of the Tropics

21 months, making it the longest running play of the collective to date, though somewhat unexpectedly. The production of *Xica* was first extended in December of 2018 when *Coletivo das Liliths* was invited to perform in Senhor do Bomfim, a municipality in the interior of Bahia. It was extended a second time in February of 2019 when the collective was selected to present *Xica* as a part of *a_ponte – Cena do Teatro Universitário*, a theater festival ran by Itaú Cultural in São Paulo. Though *Coletivo das Liliths* has officially moved on to the last two performances in the trilogy, *Xica* has gained critical acclaim amongst artists, journalists, academics and theatergoers throughout Brazil.

During our interview, Georgenes mentioned that one of the unique features of *Xica* is that they produced it in reverse order. Instead of writing a script that was then staged and performed by the collective, *Coletivo das Liliths* filmed portions of the play and sent them to Francisco André, a professor at the Federal University of Southern Bahia, who then scripted the performance. Reversing the order in which the play was produced is one example of how *Coletivo das Liliths* remains committed to collaboration, co-creation and horizontal authorship of their performances. This also stays true to the Theater of Cruelty in that, rather than prioritizing the directness of dialogue, *Coletivo das Liliths* allows sensibility (sonic, aesthetic, and embodied) to take center stage.

The production of *Xica* and the rest of the *Trilogia dos Trópicos* began with a google search for LGBTT histories in Brazil. During this research, *Coletivo das Liliths* came across the work of anthropologist, historian and founder of the *Grupo Gay da Bahia* (henceforth GGB), Luiz Mott. The selection that they found, *Homossexuais da Bahia*, details 202 cases of "sodomy and transvestism" in Bahia documented during the Portuguese Inquisition. While this is where they encountered the colonial register that would later become *Xica*, the remaining two plays in the

trilogy are derived from different research conducted by Mott on LGBTT Brazilians from other states in the Northeast. While *Coletivo das Liliths* is thankful to Luiz Mott for producing the research that made *Trilogia dos Trópicos* possible, and say as much in the introduction to the performance, it is important to remain critical of Mott's own engagement with the colonial archive. In the introduction of *Homossexuais da Bahia*, Mott uses the rhetoric of miscegenation to make an argument for why Bahia had so many documented cases of gender and sexual deviance. "Bahia rima com sodomia…" (Bahia rhymes with sodomy…) is the phrase that opens the introduction (Mott, 1999, p. 3), a phrase that, much like *terra da alegria*[6], memorializes Bahia as a place that inherently lends itself to happiness, passion, and sexual indulgence. Mott follows this comment with a detailed description of the relationship that each of the "three races" that make up the Brazilian nation (Indigenous, African and Portuguese) have to homosexuality. These are just a few examples of how Mott's prelude to the cases he found in the Portuguese Inquisition archives reproduces the very white cisheteropatriarchal violence that these documents engender. In reading against the grain of the colonial archive, *Coletivo das Liliths* is also addressing the violence of miscegenation, racial harmony and other romanizations of the colonial era that have shaped Brazilian society today.

Xica refracts the violence, of both the colonial archive and collective memory in Bahia, by performing the "what could have been" of Xica Manicongo's[7] life. Working through the silences and assumptions of the archive, *Coletivo das Liliths* presents a version of Xica that allows the

[6] *Terra da alegria* (land of happiness) is a phrase often used in Brazil when speaking of Bahia, in everything from promotional materials to famous songs about Bahia. While not explicitly problematic, this phrase is often used to elide the prevalence of anti-Black racism and violence in the state. See Smith, *Afro-Paradise*, for more information on the construction of Bahia as a space of pleasure derived from/through the disciplining of Black bodies.
[7] Xica (not italicized) refers to the person, while *Xica* (italicized) refers to the play

audience to see their own history (as Black, LGBTT, *nordestino*[8], and/or Latin American) as tied up into hers. The play draws on a mixture of African religious practice, colonial-era Portuguese and Bahian imagery to test the limits of what we can know about Xica given the dearth and unreliability of the information available in the colonial archive. In the words of Xan, one of the performers in the collective, *Xica* is a practice in *transcestralidade*, the idea that trans and travesti folks are our inheritance, our ancestors that we must honor, take care of and attend to in both life and death.

Xica Manicongo is the first-known Black travesti in Brazil. Originally from the Congo, she was trafficked to Salvador da Bahia as a slave in the late 1500s. She was bought by Antônio Pires, a cobbler who lived below the *Misericórdia de Salvador*, the center of commerce[9] in both pre- and post-independence Bahia, giving it the name *Comércio* in the present day. What is written in the official register, the Holy Office reports generated during the Portuguese Inquisition in Brazil, is that Xica (given the name "Francisco" upon her arrival) was accused of being a sodomite by Mathias Moreira, an Old Christian[10] from Lisbon. Moreira stated that Xica was gossiped about amongst the Black men of the city, who claimed that she engaged in passive sexual acts. This was "confirmed" when Moreira, having spent time in both Angola and the Congo, saw Xica walking around the city in a skirt-like garment with an opening at the back. According to Moreira, this was a common practice amongst the sexually-passive males of those African countries. After being

[8] *Nordestino*: a person of northeastern Brazil. The Northeast is general characterized as lazy, festive, backwards, and predominately Black and Indigenous.
[9] I say "commerce" not to elide the fact that this was the central port for the Transatlantic slave trade in Brazil, but rather to highlight the fact that slaves were considered goods, too.
[10] *Old Christian* was a term used to differentiate those who were "born Christian" from those *New Christians* that converted to Christianity (generally former Jews and Muslims).

caught and reprimanded by Moreira several times, Xica allegedly started wearing masculine attire while walking through the city.[11]

While neither the name "Xica" nor the term "travesti" appear in the Holy Office report, *Coletivo das Liliths* uses them to represent her gender identity and expression as accurately as possible. When I asked about her name, Georgenes was sure to mention that "Xica" bears no intentional relation to Chica da Silva.[12] Instead, her renaming serves to displace the racial-gendered violence of the colonial archive, in which her position as masculine chattel is reified by the repetition of her slave name. By giving Xica a feminine name, *Coletivo das Liliths* opens up the possibilities of her gender identity beyond that which was ascribed to her by Pires or in the Holy Office report. The use of the term "travesti" also works to make Xica's gender identity legible to a Brazilian audience, albeit with more nuance. Even though travestis present as women in their day-to-day lives, there are some that still preferred to be referred to as men. As such, claiming Xica as Brazil's first Black travesti both acknowledges her feminine gender expression while honoring the impossibility of knowing whether or not she identified as a woman. Both in her name and her gender identity, *Coletivo das Liliths* shows a fervent refusal to trust the colonial register of her life.[13]

If there is no hope of "resuscitating the girl" (Hartman, 2008, 13), then what are we to do to remember and care for Xica? What does it mean to attend to the Black LGBTT dead across space-time whose preferred names, embodied practices of gender, and other non-normative ways

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[11] In an effort to not reproduce the violence of the archive, as Saidiya Hartman cautions us against in "Venus in Two Acts," I have reworked the original report to center Xica as much as possible, while also providing points of the archival narrative that are necessary for the analysis that follows. For the original report, see Mott (1999).

[12] Chica da Silva (also spelled "Xica") was an enslaved Black woman from Minas Gerais that became wealthy through her relationship with João Fernandes, her former master. Her story has been memorialized/romanticized in various forms of art and literature, the film *Xica* (1976) and the telenovela *Xica da Silva* (1996) being the two most popular examples.

[13] For a more thorough exploration of the Portuguese Inquisition documents and their erasure of Black LGBTT subjectivities and histories, see Aidoo 2018.

of being in the world have been (and continue to be) effaced from the colonial registers of their lives? The silences of the archive do produce an irrecuperable violence, but they also present an opportunity for critical fabulation (Hartman, 11). In the analysis that follows, I position Coletivo das Liliths's play, *Xica*, as a multivalent performance that refracts the violence of the Brazilian colonial archive to gesture towards a Black LGBTT Bahian past. The play uses ghostly aesthetics, African music, and sensual performance to evoke the what-could-have-been of Xica's life. To reproduce the play as completely as possible, I analyze four critical moments of the narrative: 1) the opening monologue; 2) the "striptease"; 3) the massage; and 4) the crucifixion. While there is much to analyze, I synthesize the aesthetics, gestures and dialogue of the play in order to highlight the various dramaturgical methods performed, and the theoretical interventions they pose, to work through the silences of the colonial archive. As we journey into this dramaturgical space of healing, I want to leave us with the final words of the opening monologue, read by Xica herself: *Let us begin, we have begun.*[14]

[14] Original: "[V]amos começar, começamos!" Above translation, and all translations hereafter, mine.

THE BIRTH OF A BLACK LGBTT NATION: PERFORMING THE LIFE OF XICA MANICONGO

> *"[T]oday, here and now, we will not speak of the old history of an Invented Brazil, we will not speak of the Eurocentric academy that insists on sweeping under the rug our histories and those of the ones that came before us. We will mix the history of old Africa, with that of Black Bahia, adding our own perspective to be able to speak of our great mother"* (André, 2017, p. 1).[15]

The play opens with a monologue read by Ricky Andrade, the actor who plays Xica. The scene is dark, apart from a bright red spotlight illuminating them[16] from the front. They welcome the audience to the space, the sound from the microphone reverberating in a haunting, lingering way after each word is said. From the beginning, the monologue establishes this performance as an intervention in Brazilian colonial history, a direct response to the anti-Black and LGBTT-phobic sanitization of the archive. However, they acknowledge the collective's limitations in presenting Xica's life; mixing their knowledge of "old Africa" with their embodied experiences as Black and LGBTT Brazilians is necessary to make her story legible. This is reiterated when Andrade advises that they will speak a mix of modern Portuguese and Bantu, making some mistakes along the way (André, 2017, p. 1). After speaking more to the fictionality and limitations of the performance we are about to witness, Andrade makes a promise to our mother, Xica, that "in a not-so distant future we will emerge from the alleys and sewers, we will take over the streets, newspaper and magazine covers," embodying the same fearlessness of gender and sexual expression that she did (André, 2017, p. 1). To close the monologue and begin the performance,

[15] Original: "[H]oje, aqui e agora não falaremos da velha história de um Brasil Inventado, não falaremos da academia eurocêntrica que insiste em esconder para debaixo dos tapetes as nossas histórias e as histórias dos que vieram antes de nós. Misturaremos a história da velha Africa, com a da negra Bahia, acrescentaremos o nosso olhar 2017 para falarmos da grande mãe!"

[16] Given that Ricardo Andrade identifies as non-binary, I have elected to use "they/them" pronouns when referring to them.

Andrade pays homage to the other Black LGBTT Brazilians, both known and unknown, for the role that they have played in making the nation (André, 2017, p. 1).

The haunting of the lighting and sound, and their repetition throughout the play, carry with them the promises of the opening monologue. They are a reminder that this play is, first and foremost, a form of wake work (Sharpe, 2016, p. 19) in which both the performers and the audience position themselves as/with the Black LGBTT dead. *Coletivo das Liliths* furthers this positioning by reiterating that Xica is "our great mother," an inheritance that we, as viewers, must take on if we are to partake in the performance space. The roll call of other Black LGBTT Brazilians, "as Madames Satã, as rainhas diabas, as bichas largatixas, as Vitórias, as Marquesas,"[17] provides a temporal resonance that is amplified by the sonic reverberations created through the microphone. It is a call for us to be accountable to the Black LGBTT dead, both known and unknown, who have made it possible to be in the physical and temporal space of the performance. Perhaps the most audacious element of the opening monologue is the claim to the Brazilian nation; to say that Xica and the others mentioned in the roll call are fundamental to the construction of Brazilian national identity is to say that Brazil is a country built on the cultural, affective and sensual labor of Black LGBTT people. As the play continues, *Coletivo das Liliths* holds us accountable to this labor through Xica's relationship with Antônio Pires, as well as moments of self-love experienced in his absence.

When put in conversation with the quote from Diana Taylor's *Archive and the Repertoire* that opens this chapter, the rituality of the monologue also makes this performance an experiment

[17] Madame Satã and Rainha Diaba are two well-known Black LGBTT Brazilians, while *bichas largatixas*, *vitórias*, and *marquesas* are all derogatory terms used to speak of Black LGBTT Bahians. *Coletivo das Liliths* evokes these names, both as references to specific persons and metonymies for Black LGBTT Bahians unknown to us, in order to acknowledge that while this play speaks explicitly of Xica Manicongo, it draws upon an embodied cultural memory of Black LGBTT Brazilians like her across space and time.

in cultural memory. Neither ahistorical nor limited to the confines of official histories, cultural memory gathers up the real and the imagined to synthesize a collective consciousness that speaks across time and space. Cultural memory is precisely what allows us, as Black, LGBTT, *nordestino*, and/or Latin American, to see Xica's existence as more than the two paragraphs that are written about her in the colonial archive. She survives through the lived experiences of trans women and travestis in present-day Brazil, through the embodied memory of folks across the African diaspora grappling with the afterlives of chattel slavery, through the positioning of *nordestinos* as lesser than their compatriots from Southern Brazil, and through the geopolitical world order that views Latin America as perpetually underdeveloped in relation to the West. These are but a few of the cultural resonances that *Coletivo das Liliths* draws upon to make this performance not just about Xica, but of "all the Black LGBT[T] people that have contributed and continue to contribute to the construction of the Brazilian national identity" (André, 2017, p.1).

From positioning us in the wake with Xica to molding her body into a site of Black LGBTT Bahian memory, *Coletivo das Liliths* has created a unique space of reencounter that refracts the violence of the archive by claiming Xica as both their ancestor and mother of the Brazilian nation. As a practice in cultural memory, this play also presents Xica as an embodiment of dissident bodies in the present, using the collective's lived experiences as Black, LGBTT, *nordestino* and Latin American to remedy the passive, auxiliary nature of her presence in the colonial archive. Is it, however, too much to ask the dead to mother us? To ask Xica, and others like her, to embody our desires, our traumas, our names and our practices of worldmaking as if they were her own? *Coletivo das Liliths* responds to these concerns by crafting a performative space that lives in the interstices and silences of the archive. Rather than recreating the two paragraphs written about Xica or writing the narrative of a contemporary Black travesti and passing it off as her own,

Coletivo das Liliths gathers those moments in which the archive may have slipped up, dared not to say, took for granted, or lied about her. In doing so, they give us the opportunity to imagine Xica as someone who was defiant, sensual, and powerful in the face of colonial domination.

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After Pires buys her, washes her down, and baptizes her with a masculine name, Xica begins her work as a cobbler's apprentice. Pires, played by Thiago Carvalho in whiteface,[18] constantly reminds Xica how lucky she is to have him as a master. Taking Xica to deliver a pair of shoes to one of his clients, Pires decides to get drunk with the client, commanding Xica to walk back to the workshop on her own. As Xica is walking, she begins to transform her outfit, untying the top of her cobbler's apron so that it hangs like a skirt. Putting on a shell necklace, a pair of earrings and taking her hair down, Xica embodies a version of womanhood that she has seen while walking through the city. In the midst of her transition, she is visited by a mysterious stranger, described as a "*caboclo*, virile and sensual" who is sexually interested in Xica (André, 2017, p. 12). Though it is implied that Xica is speaking to someone, it appears that she is speaking to herself, as the man speaks through her. To complete her transformation, Xica seeks the help of the Soloist, a spectral presence that has accompanied Xica since her voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, in putting on the red skirt-like garment that marked her for persecution in the colonial archive. The remainder of the scene is a dance (Xica) and song (Soloist) that insinuates a sexual enounter between Xica and the mysterious man, performing the embodied self-love and acceptance that she had been searching for in Brazil.

[18] While Carvalho has the appearance of a white person, the collective wanted to honor that his positionality, as Brazilian and Latin American, also makes him a product, rather than simply a perpetrator of colonialism. As such, Carvalho wears whiteface to distinguish that he is "not-quite-white, not-quite-European, and not-quite-a-colonizer" (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, July 12, 2019).

The dominance of red throughout this scene holds several meanings. First and foremost, *Coletivo das Liliths* uses red to honor Xica's quimbanda roots. While the colonial register weaponizes the quimbanda religion to characterize Xica as sexually licentious, *Coletivo das Liliths* saturates the performance with red in order to "reference [her] quimbanda ancestry, which reveres and worships energies like the eshus, pombagiras and padilhas," (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, July 12, 2019). More obviously, the red paint that colors both Xica's face (see figure 1.5) and the Soloist's entire body (see figure 1.6) serves as a symbol of the violence, both past and present, against Black people. In addition to giving their bodies the appearance of being perpetually caked in blood, the red body paint continues the work of haunting started in the opening monologue. Both the red body paint and the actor in whiteface remind us that this performance is a form of wake work: not simply an observation of, but a communion with the dead. Lastly, the use of red is a metaphor for *pimenta*, a staple of Bahian cuisine that "burns the body and enhances the flavor of the food," (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, July 12, 2019). This metaphor is yet another way in which *Coletivo das Liliths* brings together "old Africa" and "Black Bahia" to make sense of Xica's life.

The *caboclo*[19] is also a lingering, haunting presence in this scene. Never appearing onstage, the *caboclo* is a metonymy for the men of the city who gossiped about Xica's sexuality. Shifting the focus from the gossip surounding her sexuality to the possibility of her sexuality as a practice in liberation, *Coletivo das Liliths* creates a space in which Xica's pleasure and self-acceptance take centerstage. Her undressing, redressing and dance serve as a striptease, not in the sense of complete physical exposure, but as an erotic self-actualization realized through feminine aesthetics and

[19] In the context of this performance, *caboclo* is meant to refer to the racial category of Brazilians of European and Indigenous ancestry. This is not to be confused with the *caboclos* of Candomblé and Umbanda, indigenous spirits who mount initiates of the religions during special celebrations devoted to them.

gestures. It causes us to think through what becomes possible when the slave is able to love (and make love to) herself. In contention with the myth of slave-master romance, like that of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson, or Xica da Silva and João Fernandes de Oliveira, this scene allows us to see Xica's identity as something beyond the service/servicing of others. Her affective and sensual labor, which will become evident in the subsequent scenes, comes second to her moments of pleasure that have been erased from/misframed within the archive. This scene speaks back to the notion that Xica's choice to wear feminine clothing was an African cultural perversion that bred sexual licentiousness. Instead, the performance positions Xica's quimbanda roots and autonomous sexuality as tools of resistance that allowed her to go out into the world and experience pleasure, both within herself and in others that aren't tied to her subjugation.

It is important to note that, while Xica's pleasure (in realizing her gender identity and fulfilling her sexual desires) constitutes the scene, this pleasure is facilitated with the help and guidance of the Soloist. Played by Inâe, the Soloist is Xica's ancestor who "occupies another plane, a kind of suspended plane in dialogue with Xica's material reality," (Coletivo das Liliths, personal communication, July 12, 2019). In addition to representing Xica's ancestor, the Soloist composes the soundscape at various moments of the performance, communicating the senses and emotions of the scene when the characters are unable, or unwilling, to do so. In helping fasten Xica's skirt and singing with her during this scene, the Soloist effectively and affectively guides Xica into embracing her femininity. The intimacy shared between these two dissident bodies, as characters in a performance, as ancestor and child, and as non-binary and trans actors, is reminiscent of the sort of mothering work that Black cis/trans women, travestis and femmes do within the Black LGBTT community today. The Soloist gives us hope that, despite the perils of chattel slavery,

Xica was not only desired by the men she passed on her long walk back home, but also loved, watched over and cared for by her transcestors.[20]

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After catching her in this moment of self-love, Pires reprimands Xica. She becomes fed up with the way that Pires thingifies her, constantly refers to her in the masculine or by her race, *crioulo*. At her breaking point, Xica screams, "I am Manicogno. Xica Manicongo!!" to which Pires responds by slapping her with all the force in his body (André, 2017, p. 15). On the floor, distraught and humiliated by this physical violence, Xica meekly apologies while maintaining that she only knows "how to be this way"[21] (André, 2017, p. 15). Unsure what to do, Pires talks to himself, complaining of the exhaustion in his feet. In an attempt to regain control of the situation, Pires calls Xica over: "Do that massage that only you know how to do in order to see if it soothes my pains"[22] (André, 2017, p. 15). He is only successful, however, after succumbing to her request to be referred to by her name, "Francisco? *(Pause. Sincerely)* Xica?" (André, 2017, p. 15). As Xica massages Pires's feet, the lights dim only to show a silhouette of this intimate moment. A spotlight is then placed on the Soloist, who makes orgasmic sounds to attend to the pleasure that Pires is unable (or unwilling) to express during the massage. After the massage, the lights return to normal. Xica asks if Pires feels better, to which he replies, "Yes, much better" (André, 2017, p. 16). As Xica walks, suggestively, back to her room, Pires becomes unable to process the excitement that he has experienced, overwritting it with the guilt and shame that a good Christian should feel in the wake of such immorality. The scene closes with the Inquisitor assuaging Pires of his guilt, assuring him that his sin is to be blamed on the demon, Xica Manicongo.

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[20] Term used within the English-speaking trans community to honor those trans ancestors (transcestors) that came before them.
[21] Original: "É que eu só sei ser assim."
[22] Original: "Faça aqui aquela massagem que só tu sabes fazer para ver se melhora minhas dores."

Despite being a moment of slave-master intimacy, it is worth thinking through how this performance deals with intimacy in a way that does not reproduce "a racial and sexual fantasy in which domination is transposed into the bonds of mutual affection" (Hartman, 1997, p. 89). The violence of the event proceeding the massage is disrupted by a moment in which Pires must submit to Xica in order to have his corporeal desires attended to. This refusal to perform affective and sensual labor for Pires, to hold his pain in her body without him attending to hers, is what Hershini Young (2017) would refer to as Xica's *illegible will*, the belief that mending the inherent violence of the colonial archive requires "performative critical engagements with absence" (p. 23). Refracting the violence of the scene by centering Xica's refusal to serve without an honest validation of her gender identity, *Coletivo das Liliths* honors Xica as an agentive, willful person who, unlike the Portuguese register of her life suggests, did not simply conceed defeeat when persecuted by those who did not respect who she was.

It would be remiss, however, to suggest that the scene is devoid of violence. It is a reminder that Xica, and other enslaved Africans like her, were physically and sexually abused by their masters (Aidoo 2018). Albeit on terms more akin to her own, Xica still performs a foot massage for a man that has just slapped her across the face. While this exact moment is not in the Portuguese register of her life, this scene emphasizes that as agentive as Xica may have been, she still serves as a repository for the "sinful" desires of her master, a metonymy for the Brazilian nation. The act of Xica massaging Pires's feet, easing his physical pain and producing arousal, is a metaphor for the affective and sensual labor that Black LGBTT Brazilians have performed for the nation since its inception. From travestis who perform sex work across Brazil's major cities, to the unrelenting

appropriation of Black LGBTT culture and bodies in *fanfarras*[23], pride parades, nighclubs, beaches, and other spaces in which non-normative pleasure may be sought, Black LGBTT Brazilians are meant to perform and hold the corporeal desires of others. It is no mistake that this intimacy is shared after physical violence is enacted upon Xica's body; oftentimes, the desire for Black LGBTT bodies is juxtaposed by a violence that persecutes them for the very labor they were sought out for. It is these logics that, for example, empower a straight cisgender man to kill a trans woman or travesti because he was "tricked" into thinking she was a "real woman". That allow non-LGBTT bodies to enjoy a drag show or a Black femme shaking their ass on the stage at a pagode show, but brutalize or violate them when they dare to maintain the same freedom of gender and sexual expression beyond those moments. That allow Pires to be soothed and aroused by Xica, and yet still claim his piety and innocence in the face of the Portuguese law. In essence, Xica's life as told by *Coletivo das Liliths* becomes a site of palimpsestic embodiment, an interlocking of the past, present and future via the repetition and resonance of anti-Black LGBTT violence across space-time (Smith, 2016, p. 165).

•••

The final scene of the performance begins with Xica dancing downstage, binding herself with the elastic background in a position reminiscent of the crucifixion, an auto-da-fé (Aidoo, 2018, p. 31). The loudness of the drums and the painfulness of her movements signals that this is not a moment of joy or ecstacy, like before, but of persecution. After yelling above the beat of the drums in Bantu, likely a call of desparation to her ancestors, Pires appears in front of her. Blaming her, once again, for corrupting him and placing them in the current situation, Pires attempts to get

[23] *Fanfarras* are marching bands that typically perform during major state-level and national celebrations, namely Bahian and Brazilian Independence Day in Salvador. I mention the fanfarras because many of the dancers, musicians and directors are notably Black femmes (and very occasionally, Black trans women and travestis).

Xica to confess to the crime of daring to live out her truth as a travesti. He reassures her that, if she blames her perversion on demons and embraces Christianity, she will be let go. When Xica refuses, claiming that her deities and ancestors are not demonic, but sacred, Pires pleads that she do so regardless: "What we do most in this city is find our own way to survive"[24] (André, 2017, p. 19). After several more attempts at making Xica repent, ending in emotional outbursts on both sides, Pires asks Xica, in tears, what he will do when she's gone? Unwavering, Xica states the facts of their relationship:

> **Xica –** You are white. A free man. Widowed. You can do as you wish, whenever you'd like. But me, outside of the fire I am still a slave.
>
> **Pires –** And the appreciation I have for you?
>
> **Xica –** (*coldly*) You are a good man. I thank you for everything you have done for me. But we are not equal. There can only exist gratitude… Affection… (*the two characters look at one another*) Love… in freedom.[25]
>
> (Andre, 2017, p. 20)

The scene then freezes, leaving Xica's final act of defiance, refusing Pires's claim to her body, frozen in time. This moment serves as the backdrop to the epilogue, narrated by the Soloist.

In contrast with other parts of the performance, in which *Coletivo das Liliths* adapts and reworks portions of the Portuguese register of Xica's life, the final scene completely disregards the colonial archive. Whereas the Holy Office reports claim that Xica began to walk around the city in men's clothing after being reprimanded several times for her feminine appearance, *Coletivo*

[24] Original: "O que a gente mais faz nessa cidade é dar nosso jeito pra sobreviver."
[25] Original: "Tu é branco. Homem livre. Viúvo. Pode fazer o que quiser, a hora que bem entender. Já eu, fora da fogueira sou escravizada."//"(mesmo tom) E o apreço que lhe tenho?"// "(fria) O Sinhô é bom. Agradeço pelo que já fez por mim. Mas não há igualdade entre a gente. Só pode existir gratidão... Afeto... (os dois personagens se entreolham) Amor... em liberdade."

das Liliths imagines a bolder, more confrontational closing to Xica's story. As they state in the opening monologue, this play is meant to be a departure from the Eurocentric narratives of Brazilian history, leaving *Coletivo das Liliths* unbeholen to the Portuguese rendering of how Xica conducted herself in the face of adversity. Even if she was to stop wearing feminine clothing in public, for example, who is to say that she did not continue to practice her gender in private, both alone and in the company of those men in the city that desired her body? Whether we read Xica's refusal to renounce her gender as a death sentence, a practice in freedom, or both is for the viewer to decide; *Coletivo das Liliths* purposefully leaves the ending open so as not to distract from the purpose of rewritting it. Instead, we are called to read this moment in Xica's story as one of many possible endings that, rather than end with her subjugation under colonial gender norms, imagines her capacity to practice freedom, no matter how impossible the circumstances.

Despite the image of the crucifixtion, and its mention in the performance notes, the scene simultaneously draws on the image of the *pelourinho*, a stone post constructed in city centers across Brazil to publicly punish criminals and unruly slaves. By conjuring the pelourinho in this moment, *Coletivo das Liliths* highlights the irony of Xica's persecution and the realities of chattel slavery. The irony lies in the fact that Xica is being punished for the affective and sexual labor that she has provided Pires and the caboclo, labors that are facilitated by unapologetically embracing her gender and sexuality. The crucifixion imagery, therefore, is not an attempt to establish Xica as a martyr, but rather to highlight that, as Jesus died for our sins in the Christian religious tradition, Xica was forced to hold the sins of her master and those that turned their desire for her body into the gossip that led to her persecution. The image of the pelourinho, on the other hand, links the collective memory of Portuguese colonial torture to the body of a Black travesti. To claim that Xica, in all her defiance, was tortured at the pelourinho is a practice in cultural memory, the

interconnection of what we know about Xica and African slaves like her in order to imagine the details of her persecution amidst their ommission from the colonial archive. The pelourinho further displaces the romaniticism of the crucifixion by confronting us with the harsh realities of chattel slavery, a fact elided by the pristine, colorful appearance of present-day Pelourinho, a UNESCO World Heratige site and the neighborhood in the historic center of Salvador that housed the pelourinho. Through this moment in the performance, Coletivo das Liliths establishes pelourinho, both the torture device and the neighborhood, as specific sites of Black LGBTT Bahian memory.

The dialogue in this scene also furthers the work of performing Xica's illegible will, particularly in the final interaction between Xica and Pires. The assertion that gratitude, affection and love can only exist in freedom negates the "family romance" of slave-master intimacy (Hartman, 1997, p. 89). The coldness with which she delivers this final act of refusal concretizes the fact that Xica could never love her master nor, by extension, the Brazilian nation. When Pires whispers, in an attempt to get Xica to lie and save herself, that people in Salvador are constantly finding a way to survive, Xica responds, unwilling to further compromise herself, "I have already spent too much time in this wretched land pretending to be something I am not" (André, 2017, 19). The persistence of Xica's defiance in the face of colonial anxieties surrounding gender and sexual deviance unveils the central purpose of this performance. Reckoning with the demonization of a Black travesti from the colonial period, and the resonances of her marginalization with the expereinces of Black LGBTT Bahians in the present, *Xica* is a corrective to the inistence that the "winners" (in this case, the Portuguese) have the authority to write the history of the colonized. In refusing to believe that two paragraphs in the Holy Office reports were all we could know about Xica, *Coletivo das Liliths* leverages their performance practice to mend the structural and

epistemic violences of the colonial archive, tracing the flow of Black LGBTT memory throughout Salvador.

THIS STORY IS NOT AN ENDING, BUT A BEGINNING…

The title of this chapter, *Blood as Thick as Water*, is not purely for the sake of being poetic or provocative. In addition to representing a play on the old adage, *blood is thicker than water*, this title is another gesture towards Sharpe's theorization of what it means to live in the wake of chattel slavery. In Chapter Two of *In the Wake*, she makes the poignant claim that slaves thrown overboard during the Transatlantic Slave Trade are physically incorporated into the Atlantic Ocean. Utilizing the oceanographic knowledge of her colleague, Anne Gardulski, Sharpe writes the following:

> "The amount of time it takes for a substance to enter the ocean and then leave the ocean is called residence time. Human body is salty, and sodium, Gardulski tells me, has a residence time of 260 million years. And what happens to the energy that is produced in the waters? It continues cycling like atoms in residence time. We, Black people, exist in the residence time of the wake, a time in which 'everything is now. It is all now' (Morrison 1987, 198)." (Sharpe, 2016, p. 41)

When we understand the Atlantic Ocean as, on a molecular level, made up of the blood of African slaves, the idea that blood can be as thick as water holds scientifically. But what I engage in this chapter are the metaphoric reverberations that this oceanography of Blackness makes possible. What would it mean for bloodlines, place-based attachments, and other historically-deterministic ways of engaging with the past to be as permeable, as fluid, and as unknowable as the Atlantic Ocean? This is not to say that we should give up on family, ancestry, or homeland(s), but rather that bodies (un)like ours, that we will never truly know but recognize as/like us, can play just as much of a role in our self- and world-making practices as those we consider kin.

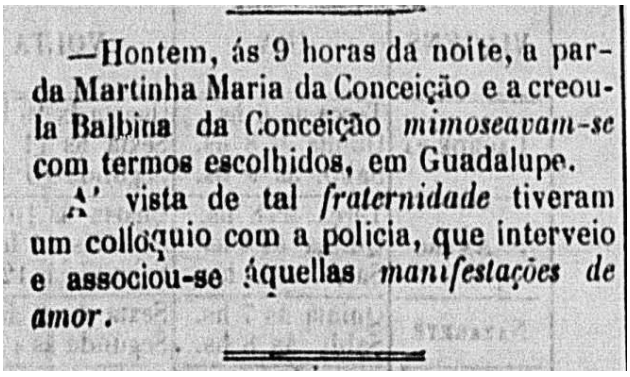
Both Pop Pop and Xica have required me (as grandson, Black queer, and diasporic subject) to renegotiate traditional ways of knowing the past. The disorientation of finding out about my new aunts and uncle made me doubt how well I knew Pop Pop, exacerbating the loss that I already felt at the news of his passing. While I may not have known everything about his life, I have a living, breathing archive of aunts, uncles and cousins who can help me construct a fuller picture of it. There are nearly 420 years of difference, however, between us and Xica, making it very unlikely that we will learn any new information about her that is not already out in the world. The reality of chattel slavery is that our histories were never meant to stand the test of time, and Xica, as a slave and travesti, likely did not have any networks of kith or kin that were documented. That said, Coletivo das Liliths provides us with a portrait of her life that is defiant, willful, and honest regarding her circumstances under chattel slavery, while refusing to be limited by them. Though Hartman (2008) cautions us against "placing yet another demand upon the girl" (p. 14), *Xica* ameliorates that violence through its reverence for her, keeping in mind that her story is not spectacular or heroic. It's the story of, as Coletivo das Liliths states in the opening, "all the Black LGBT[T] people that have and continue to contribute to the construction of Brazilian national identity" (André, 2017, p.1). As such, *Xica* provides not an origin story for Black LGBTT identity in Bahia, but rather an all-too-familiar account of the afterlife of slavery from a Black LGBTT Bahian perspective. To understand the material reality of Black LGBTT Bahians in the present requires a critical engagement with the past, for archiving, in our own way, how the Black LGBTT body is handled by the Brazilian nation will lessen the possibilities for history to repeat itself.

Appendix A

1.1 Bus riders in the neighborhood of São Joaquim; one man looking playfully at the other as he stares intently at the camera. (1978, Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador)

1.2 Men dressed in feminine *fantasias* for Carnaval. Photo originally labeled as "Travestis – carnaval – Salvador" (1974, Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador)

1.3 Four women, some of who are travestis, posing for a photo in a bathroom during Carnaval. Photo originally labeled as ""Travestis – carnaval – Salvador" (1980, Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador)



—Hontem, ás 9 horas da noite, a par-
da Martinha Maria da Conceição e a creou-
la Balbina da Conceição *mimoseavam-se*
com termos escolhidos, em Guadalupe.
A' vista de tal *fraternidade* tiveram
um colloquio com a policia, que interveio
e associou-se áquellas *manifestações de*
amor.

1.4 Excerpt from newspaper in Bahia, detailing a tryst between two non-white Brazilian women. (1879, O Alabama)

1.5 Xica performing self-love while Pires is away (Magnoni, 2017)

1.6 The Soloist, laughing (Magnoni, 2017)

Chapter Two – At the Limits of Desire: A Black LGBTT Perspective of the City

(Re)making the Brazilian Nation: Dois de Julho and Black Femme Performance Aesthetics

After a few hours of watching the parade, both alone and in the fleeting company of acquaintances that I bumped into, I finally encountered my colleague and fellow Fulbright researcher, Vanessa. Joined by one of her friends, the daughter of a Baiana de Acarajé, we watched as the final bands passed through Avenida Sete de Setembro. Around six in the afternoon, the highly anticipated *Banda Marcial de Pirajá* (MASP Show) arrived on the scene. Rainbow flags in hand, they were the most visibly LGBTT band, despite the distinctly feminine gestures and aesthetics present throughout the parade. Both the overwhelming number of band members and the explicit evocation of gender and sexuality in their performance captured the attention of everyone on the street. Playing a medley of U.S. and Brazilian pop songs, MASP Show supplanted the official modes of commemorating the Bahian Independence Day parade with their own contemporary existence as Black LGBTT Bahians.

As they played the first two songs in the medley, the three male dancers took over the street. At this point, we had seen many iterations of this performance: Black men and boys in tight, glittery leotards doing splits, majestic leaps, one-legged twirls, and other flexible moves typically associated with the feminine. A presence akin to that of Olympic ice skaters and gymnasts, the crowd went wild for these three figures, yelling phrases in hopes that their longings would conjure more spectacular performances. *É ela!*[26] and *Fecha!*[27] are just a few of the utterances that adorned the sonic landscape of the street, acknowledgements of the Black femme performance aesthetics that these three dancers embodied.

[26] Translation: She's the one!
[27] Translation: Slay it! (will give a more in-depth translation here)

For the final song in their medley, MASP Show played *Jenifer*, a Carnaval hit by Gabriel Diniz, who died in a plane crash a couple of months prior. During their tribute to the recently deceased singer, the instrumental ensemble split to either side of the street, creating a corridor in the middle where members of the band danced with the crowd. While many of the bands stop at designated parts of the street to perform their routines, this act of audience participation was unique in that it broke from the scripted organization of the parade. In pulling crowd members into the street and dancing to a popular Carnaval song, MASP Show created a rupture in the designated space-time of the parade, prolonging the momentary by repositioning the spectator as participant, the dissident as constituent, the provincial as official.

This scenario of Black LGBTT performance in Salvador's historic center is one of the many experiments in Black gender and sexuality that I engage in this chapter. Disrupting dominant notions of queerness in the city as inextricably linked to global gay capitalism, I trace the contemporary transitions of Black LGBTT space and place throughout Salvador. Starting with the center of the city, a place of both joy and violence for this community, I describe the Dois de Julho parade commemorating Bahian independence as a moment in which Black LGBTT bodies constitute the Brazilian nation, Bahian state, and city of Salvador. This description is followed by a brief exploration of the explicit ties between urban development, tourism, and global gay capitalism, highlighting the physical and ideological structuring of the city's coastal areas around pleasure, consumption, and desire. The rest of the chapter evinces this structuring and its effects, which I refer to as *geographies of desire*, focusing on two interviews with Black transfeminine[28] Bahians. My decision to center the geographies of Black transfemmes in my exploration of desire

[28] Transfeminine is a term that describes those who are on the spectrum of transgender identity and present as feminine in their daily lives. I use this term to be inclusive of folks who may not identify as trans women but share similar experiences as trans and feminine individuals (e.g. travestis and non-binary femmes).

is a direct response to Dora Silva Santana's theorization of *mais viva*, a Black transfeminist assertion that "is imbricated with the knowledge developed as strategies to experience one's own self-making with more intensity, a sense of urgency, by persistently refusing imposed distorted images and expectations" (2019, p. 216). While I contextualize these narratives with stories from other members of the Black LGBTT Bahian community, centering Black transfemmes in my theorization of geographies of desire is a political choice that honors the salience of pleasure, consumption, and corporeal violence in the daily lives of Black trans and travesti folks, as well as their agentive, embodied responses to these impositions on their freedom of movement throughout the city, state, and nation.

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Bahian Independence Day, locally referred to as *Dois de Julho*, is a day in which Black LGBTT identity produces the Brazilian nation, the Bahian state, and the city of Salvador. Dois de Julho exists in contention with Brazilian Independence Day, the nationally-recognized moment in which Dom Pedro I declared Brazil an independent nation on September 7, 1822 at the Ipiranga River in São Paulo. Dom Pedro I became the emperor of Brazil following this action, later giving up his title and returning to Europe in 1831, leaving Brazil under the governance of his son, Dom Pedro II, until 1889 (Pimenta, 2016, p. 7-12). The harmonious, democratic memorialization of Brazil's separation from the Portuguese Crown elides the 11-months war waged against the Portuguese in Salvador da Bahia, a popular resistance in which many African slaves and Indigenous people[29] participated and lost their lives, ending in the complete retreat of Portuguese troops on July 2, 1823 (Kraay, 1999, 256). Despite the national erasure of the event, however, Bahians have declared Dois de Julho as the official end to Portuguese colonization in Brazil. In

[29] *Caboclo* was the term used to speak of indigenous folks at the time, though it is contested in the present day and can be evoked in a derogatory way.

addition to the chronology of these two disjointed acts of independence, with the events of Sete de Setembro preceding those of Dois de Julho, the dispute as to when, where, and how Brazilian independence occurred is a proxy for centuries of racialized regional conflicts in Brazil. To root the collective national memory of independence in an event where Black and Indigenous bodies ended Portuguese colonization would be to liken Brazilian Independence to that of the Haitian Revolution, posing a threat to the promises of racial democracy and Western modernity.

In one of the few articles analyzing nineteenth-century commemorations of Dois de Julho, Hendrik Kraay states that, "[d]espite the efforts of Bahians who sought to associate Dois de Julho with Brazilian independence, it was not allowed into the constellation of Brazilian national holidays, and remained a local holiday commemorated with greatest verve in the city of Salvador" (1999, 257). While holidays represent one of many articulations of national memory (such as museums, memorials, folklore, etc.), the refusal to include Dois de Julho as a part of the official narrative of independence is yet another effort to root Brazil's origins as spatially and temporally distant from the Northeast, a region that, while culturally rich, is characterized as poor, disorganized, and antithetical to the project of Brazilian modernity. It is by these logics that *nordestino* becomes synonymous with *retirante*, *paraíba*, *cabeça chata*[30] and other slurs that fix the region, and its predominantly Black and Indigenous populations, in a distant, indeterminable past.

What is more interesting in Kraay's work, however, is his positioning of *how* Dois de Julho was commemorated as another reason for its exclusion from the official history of independence:

> *What makes Dois de Julho so difficult to grasp is its mix of elements. It was a civic ritual with extensive popular participation most unlike the highly-structured official Brazilian state rituals, in which participation was carefully regulated and controlled from above,*

[30] Retirante and paraíba are derogatory words used against immigrants from the North and Northeast to other parts of Brazil. Cabeça chata (annoying head) is a direct reference to the assumed unintelligence of people from these regions.

> *and popular involvement 'simulated'…Indeed, if one accepts later accounts of the first Dois de Julhos, the festival was a civic ritual largely created from below, not mandated by state authorities. Moreover, Dois de Julho quickly escapes the category of civic ritual, merging into something resembling Carnival, with its apparent liberty and licence that nevertheless respects fundamental social boundaries. Dois de Julho also drew on the extensive heritage of colonial religious festivals, in which, during the eighteenth century, Church and crown attempted to regulate public ritual but faced resistance from a vibrant popular culture.* (Kraay, 1999, 257-58)

In other words, Dois de Julho has always existed in this flux between state-sanctioned celebration and civic ritual. It is not surprising, then, that Black LGBTT folks have appropriated the day to position their affective and sensual labor as essential to the sociocultural fabric of the nation, state, and city. While Dois de Julho is a joyous celebration that monopolizes the historic center of Salvador, it would be reductionist to suggest that Dois de Julho is simply a Carnavalesque commemoration of Bahian history. Early in the morning, many activists, cultural groups and practitioners of Afro-diasporic religions will march from the Largo da Lapinha in Liberdade to the Largo Terreiro de Jesus in Pelourinho. This procession, meant to honor the social, political and cultural work of Bahians in the present, generally ends with *feijoadas*[31] at various restaurants and cultural spaces throughout the historic center. While there are many LGBTT and feminist activist groups that march in this part of the parade, Black LGBTT identity is most salient in the second portion of the festivities, organized by the Municipal Secretary of Culture and Tourism (SECULT).

The *fanfarras de Dois de Julho* (referred to colloquially as *fanfarras*) are marching bands that perform and compete in the official parade for Bahian Independence Day. The sonic and aesthetic composition of the fanfarras are similar to that of Black high school, college and university marching bands in the Southern United States, which include a drum major, majorettes, color guard and an instrumental ensemble. While the majority of them are either connected to the Bahian armed forces or public schools, the fanfarras represent a wide range of Bahians, from the

[31] Feijoada can either reference the bean and meat stew dish or the gatherings at which it is served (I use the latter).

metropolitan area to the interior towns and cities of the state. Those who understand the spatial, cultural and performative codes of the celebration, however, also recognize the presence of the "beautiful experiments" in Black gender and sexuality that take place during the parade (Hartman, 2019).

The route of the fanfarras, starting at the Praça Castro Alves and ending at the Largo do Campo Grande, traverses the full length of Avenida Sete de Setembro. The avenue, which bears the name of the nationally-recognized date of Brazilian independence, is partially contained within the neighborhood of Dois de Julho, a spatial transposition of the provincial and national narratives of the Brazilian (non-)struggle for freedom from colonial rule. Though possibly unintentional, it is worth noting that the fanfarras, unlike LGBTQ Pride, Black Consciousness Day, Carnaval, and other parades that occur on Avenida Sete, march in the opposite direction of the intended flow of traffic, effectively (re)making the national narrative through their embodied performance of Bahian independence. Through these practices in inversion, the fanfarras represent a queering of the official and unofficial accounts of Brazilian liberation: the national becomes housed in the local, the provincial is made official, and those contradictory, collective memories of national formation are intermeshed in a palimpsestic conceptualization of space-time (Smith, 2016).

The parade starts with a tribute to the events of July 2, 1823 as memorialized by two floats: the *caboclo* and the *cabocla*. Existing since the earliest commemorations of Dois de Julho, their positioning at the forefront of the parade is a gesture meant to "associate the new Brazilian nation with its non-white members," reconfiguring the narrative of Brazilian independence as that of Bahian popular resistance (Kraay, 1999, p. 265). While this did not abate the realities of pre-abolition Black life in Salvador, manifested through the condemnation of Afro-Brazilian religious traditions that had found their way into the parades (Kraay, 268-69), the Dois de Julho celebrations

of today seem to embrace Black bodies and traditions in their production. The caboclo and cabocla, for example, are accompanied by a sea of Baianas dressed in long, bulbus white dresses, a visual that is emblematic of the Bahian state and reified by their designation as immaterial patrimony of the Brazilian nation in 2005.[32]

The caboclo and cabocla floats are followed by someone dressed as Portuguese royalty, a figure whose sole purpose is to be heckled by the parade attendees. This flamboyant, regal caricature of the Portuguese crown is accompanied by several battalions from the Bahian armed forces and military schools. Also appearing in the early celebrations of Dois de Julho, these battalions are expectedly disciplined and regimented, a clear-cut allegiance to the state-sanctioned rituals of the parade. The most anticipated performance, however, is that of the thirty public school fanfarras that travel from various parts of Bahia to participate in this civic ritual. It is through these fanfarras that Dois de Julho becomes legible as a symphonic commemoration of Bahia's revolutionary past, relying on the sonic, aesthetic and embodied practices of Black LGBTT bodies to constitute the nation in the present.

Preparing throughout the year, the public school fanfarras are made up of nearly 1,600 students between the ages of nine and eighteen. While some of the fanfarras appear in the morning parade, playing both traditional Dois de Julho anthems and Brazilian Popular Music (MPB), the majority participate in the afternoon and primary play Western and Brazilian pop songs (Bahia.Ba, 2019). The afternoon fanfarras each come prepared with a 5-10-minute routine, ranging in complexity from a single song and dance to a fully choreographed medley with spectator participation, like the presentation of MASP Show that opens this chapter. As such, the effort exerted along each stretch of the parade route is meticulously calculated in order to preserve the

[32] For more information on the Baianas, see Castañeda 2014.

stamina of the performers, slowly building in intensity as the students advance towards Campo Grande. Without a doubt, the most dynamic and glamorous performances are withheld until the fanfarras reach the Beco do Rosário, affectionately renamed the *beco de fechação* in honor of the experiments in Blackness, gender and sexuality that take place there.

In order to fully understand what happens in the *beco de fechação*, one must understand the sociolinguistic meanings of *fechação*. This is to say that a translation of the concept can only be understood in the context of Black gender and sexuality in Brazil. Originating in the Brazilian LGBTQ+ community, the term *fechação*[33] is best described as slay(ing): a climactic, awe-inspiring event or action that captivates all those who witness it. Despite the use of the term from both inside and outside of the LGBTQ+ community in Brazil, fechação takes on a particular significance when applied to the gestures, aesthetics and overall production of Black LGBTT bodies. As I mention in Chapter One, the Black LGBTT Bahian body is always expected to produce pleasure through sex, dance and beauty, among other forms of affective and sensual labor. These consumptive ways of viewing the Black LGBTT Bahian body shape the geographic (im)possibilities of Black LGBTT identity, a phenomenon that I refer to as *geographies of desire*. The concept of fechação, and its delimitation of Black LGBTT space-time, is a critical example of how desire is both leveraged and enforced to determine when, where and to what ends the Black LGBTT body can exist, a spatiality that is perpetually contested, subtly negotiated, and subversively constituted.

Located nearly in the middle of Avenida Sete, the beco de fechação is an ephemeral space made both with and through the Black LGBTT body. In his ethnography of the performance of Black gay identity and the production of space in the Dois de Julho fanfarras, Vinicius Santos da Silva describes the beco de fechação as both a physical and ideological reshaping of the official

[33] Literal translation: closing (from the verb *fechar*, meaning "to close")

geographies that constitute the parade, neighborhood, and state of Bahia. Through his profound description of the performances that occur in the beco de fechação, Silva identifies three key groups that delimit its geography: 1) Hilda Furacão; 2) the audience; and 3) the balizadores. Hilda, a *bicha preta*[34] known throughout Salvador for his feverish samba dancing, is the architect of the beco de fechação. With a flag, baton or other instrument in hand, Hilda ensures that the endlessly-encroaching crowd of spectators provides space for the fechação to happen. The audience, under the guidance of Hilda and through their gathering in anticipation of the fanfarras, define the physical limits of the beco de fechação. A boundary that is as fixed as it is transient, the audience circulates freely from one side of the street to the other, the exception being when Hilda signals that it is time to make way for the fanfarras. Each fanfarra is typically led by dancers, who are followed by the drum major and instrumental ensemble. The *balizadores*, who Silva describes as Black men and boys wearing tight, glittery clothing, do not appear in every fanfarra. As such, they are "expected figures, incarnated as the essence of the celebrations, the beauty of the festivities, counterpoint to the 'normative'," [35] (2019, p. 210). Their arrival parts the crowd, commands attention, and imbues the beco de fechação with its intended meaning. However, Silva is sure to mention that each of these groups plays a critical role in the physical and ideological formation of the space: "the *fechação* is not solely on the part of the dancers, [but also] the audience that divides the space in the act of socialization amongst one another"[36] (2019, p. 204). A space that is collectively constituted by Hilda, the audience, and the balizadores, the beco de fechação is both

[34] *Bicha preta*, or Black femme, is a gender term usually used in reference to effeminate Black men, and to a lesser extent with Black trans women and travestis.

[35] Original: ...figuras esperadas, encarnadas como essência das celebrações, a graça das festividades, contraponto ao 'normativo'

[36] Original: ...a *fechação* não fica apenas por conta dos balizadores, a audência divide o espaço no reconhecido ato de sociabilidade entre pares.

a practice in and locale for Black LGBTT placemaking via visuality, performativity and queer sociability.

However, the balizadores are not the only Dois de Julho figures that are capable of fechação. While the most attention is given to the Black men and boys, in part because of the affront that their performances pose to normative notions of Black masculinity, Black cis/trans women, girls, and travestis also perform the affective and sensual labor of fechação. While I attend to the erasure of Black women and travestis in the representation of LGBTT space later in this chapter, we must honor the fact that Black femme identity is being performed in extravagant ways within the beco de fechação. Fechação is a spatiality of Black LGBTT identity not in its attachment to particular gendered or sexually-oriented bodies, but rather in its gathering up of non-normative, marginal ways of being in the world to celebrate what it means to be Black, Bahian, and Brazilian.

The fanfarras, both in their ephemerality and organization, gesture to yet another problem: What happens when the Black LGBTT Bahian body falls too short of desire, or even refuses to be desired? Fechação becomes the expectation of Black LGBTT identity beyond the parade, an expectation that haunts the daily lives of Black LGBTT Bahians throughout the city. As with the exploitation of Xica Manicongo's affective, sensual and sexual labor under chattel slavery explored in Chapter One, Black LGBTT people are caught up in overlapping local, national, and global economies of consumption that position us as always available to fulfill the corporeal desires of others. While Black people can be the purveyors of such exploitations as well, I am more concerned with how both White and "metonymically White" (Wynter, 1994, 52) individuals and social structures, through their desires and anxieties around those desires, position the Black LGBTT body as a site of consumption and violation (see Woodard 2014).[37] Throughout the

[37] For a thorough explanation of metonymically race as it relates to Salvador da Bahia, see Smith 2016.

remainder of this chapter, I outline how desire is mapped onto and through the Black LGBTT Bahian body along the *orla*, the coastline of Salvador that is home to the city's most popular beaches, bars, and other pleasure-spaces. I propose *geographies of desire* as a conceptual framework for understanding the architectural, conceptual, and corporeal landscapes that are created through and in relation to the Black LGBTT Bahian body. Centering the stories of two Black transfeminine Bahians, I highlight the exploitations, contestations, and negotiations around desire that comprise Black LGBTT space-time. By outlining the raced, gendered and sexual logics that structure the urban landscape, I present a Black LGBTT Bahian perspective of the city, a perspective that is critical to understanding the effects of urban development, sexual politics, and global systems of power on Black queer and trans bodies throughout the African diaspora.

FROM A DESIRE FOR GEOGRAPHY TO A GEOGRAPHY OF DESIRE

The genealogy of desire within the field of geography can be traced back to two edited volumes: *Mapping Desire* (1995) and *Geographies of Sexualities* (2007). *Mapping Desire* is self-described by its editors as the first scholarly book to explore questions of sexuality from a geographical perspective. In the introduction, David Bell and Gill Valentine explain that, "the landscapes of desire which this book seeks to address are the eroticised topographies—both real and imagined—in which sexual acts and identities are performed and constituted" (1995, p. 1). In other words, this edited volume considers sex and the erotic as the main mechanisms through which desire is articulated spatially. Produced in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, gay gentrification, and widespread queerbashings, it makes sense that these scholars pay particular attention to the spatial constraints placed on queer affect and sexual practice. However, this focus

overshadows other potential readings of desire in space, particularly how queer and trans[38] people, even when they are not engaging in sex or erotic practice, must embody and perform desire in order to be deserving of space.

Geographies of Sexualities furthers this project by analyzing the theoretical, practical and political contributions of the subfield. While still remaining close to sex and the erotic as spatial manifestations of desire, the authors engage topics such as respectability and capitalism to discuss how queer bodies are organized, differentiated, and enveloped into broader spatial orders. Most notable in this volume is Mark Casey's expansion upon the "queer unwanted", a term coined by Jon Binnie to describe bodies and sexual practices deemed undesirable both inside and outside of the queer community. By linking ableism and ageism in queer spaces to issues of commercialization, Casey shows that queer bodies are only welcome in public if they produce pleasure and generate capital (2007, p. 135). Though not taken up in Casey's chapter, Binnie poses a valuable reminder in his own chapter that "race, gender, [and] class," as well as ableism and ageism, produce the queer unwanted (2007, p. 30).

In this sense, desire becomes a spatial tool through which non-normative bodies are organized. It fuels the logics that produce an implicit understanding of who is deserving of space, citizenship, and humanity. Desire is why a trans person must be cis-passing to avoid physical violence, or why poor Black and Latinx queers were historically barred from entering San Francisco's gay nightclubs. More heinous still is the cooptation of the queer unwanted for, as Rinaldo Walcott states, the self-making of dominant queers through various forms of cultural production (2007, p. 244). House music, voguing and the popularity of drag queens of color are some key examples of the ways that the queer unwanted simultaneously shape landscapes of desire

[38] I use "queer and trans" in parts of this section to mimic the language in these articles, which are written in a western context.

while being systematically excluded from them. Understanding desire as constitutive of space beyond erotic and sexual practice is the first step to moving from a desire for geography to a geography of desire.

As I state in the introduction, recent work in the field of critical geography has attended to these deficiencies by highlighting how race, class, gender, and sexuality coalesce and impact the spatial possibilities of Black queer and trans folks throughout the diaspora. Scholarly collections such as *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (McKittrick and Woods, 2008) and *Gender and Sexual Geographies of Blackness* (Bailey and Shabazz, 2014a and b) evince the White supremacist, heteropatriarchal underpinnings of space by exploring how Black gender and sexual minorities reimagine spaces designed to exclude them. From Sonjah Stanley Niaah's conceptualization of *performance geography* to analyze the resonances in Afro-diasporic cultures of song and dance, to Xavier Livermon's formulation of *usable space* to describe Black queer appropriations of spaces readily available to them, the Black geographies project has encouraged diverse examinations of what constitutes Black space. However, neither of these collections sufficiently address the particular spatial challenges that Black trans folks face, nor their practices in resistance to impositions on their geographic possibilities. As such, I turn back to Dora Silva Santana's theorization of *mais viva* (more alive), putting it in conversation with McKittrick's work on Black femininity in order to root my exploration of desire in the lives and experiences of Black transfeminine Bahians. My choice to take a Black transfeminist approach to reading the urban landscape is both a political statement on the critical importance of centering trans lives in academic research and a testament to the salience of desire within the lives of Black transfeminine folks. Desire, while at times joyous and wanted, often turns deadly for Black trans women, travestis, and other transfemmes. Exploring not only the intricacies of their lives, but their agentive

responses to moments in which desire is enacted upon their body in spatially restrictive ways, will unveil the racial-gendered-sexual logics that organize the city.

The section that follows uses tourism, urban planning, and cultural anthropology to understand the physical and ideological formation of the *orla*, Salvador's coastline and the geographic stage for the remainder of this chapter. I intersperse my own work at the *Fundação Mario Leal Ferreira* (Mario Leal Ferreira Foundation), the municipal archive of urban planning, with a key ethnographic text on sex tourism in Bahia. While my focus is on how Black trans women navigate the racial-gendered-sexual terrain of the orla, tourism is present in the everyday, psychosexual construction of the city. I argue that, in addition to contributing to the fiscal and sexual economies of the city, tourism is factored into the built environment of Salvador through government partnerships with the tourism industry. Understanding the orla as physically and ideologically articulated through tourism lays bare the justifications for who is and is not deserving of space and, under the most extreme of circumstances, life.

(RE)MAPPING SALVADOR'S ORLA

Black Mecca, Chocolate City, *Pedaço da África*—these are just a few alternate names for Salvador da Bahia. Tourists and Bahians alike recognize these names as racialized characterizations of Salvador's people, culture, and landscape. From the architectural vestiges of chattel slavery to the *axé*[39] that imbues the landscape with ancestral energies, Salvador is materially and spiritually overflowing with Blackness. As a result, the tourism industry in Bahia is articulated through Black bodies—beautiful Black men playing capoeira on the beach and Black women in colorful clothing serving exotic foods are just some of the figures conjured to sell Salvador. A

[39] Axé (or ashe/ase) is the cosmic power that effects and produces change. Axé is a concept present in a variety of West African religious traditions.

Black cultural paradise curated for outside consumption, Salvador occupies the Brazilian national imaginary as a space where your desires, be they cultural or corporeal, are fulfilled beyond your wildest dreams. Behind the façade of Black joy, however, lies a cycle of exploitation that renders Bahians, regardless of their level of direct involvement in the tourism industry, vulnerable, violable, and at the whim of those from outside of the state (Smith, 2016).

The orla is one such space where these relations play out. In her monograph on sex tourism and race in Salvador, Erica Lorraine Williams provides an ethnographic description of the orla, a collection of coastal neighborhoods that represent "prime locations for various types of exchanges and interactions between tourists and locals" (Williams, 2013, p. 18). The story she uses as an exemplar of these exchanges, a Black Bahian man eager to speak with foreign tourists, confronts the reader with "the ambiguity that is central to the sexual economies in Salvador" (p. 19). While we may never know his intentions in approaching and complimenting foreign tourists, his actions are part of a larger constellation of affection that pervades the orla. From friendly street vendors to emboldened tourists, the orla is a space marked by friendship, sexual liaisons, romance, prostitution, and hustling. Even those who are not in search of these relationships will find themselves caught up in a meticulous web of desire and consumption.

Given that the orla is a pleasure-space fraught with meaning for both tourists and locals, I began to wonder whether there exists traceable links between urban planners and the tourism industry to physically structure the coastline towards these ends. This interest brought me to the Mario Leal Ferreira Foundation, named after the Bahian engineer and head of the *Escritório do Plano de Urbanismo da Cidade de Salvador* (henceforth EPUCS). Considered the most important phase in Salvador's urban development post-establishment, EPUCS implemented public works projects over the course of five years (1942-47) and operated under the fervent belief that Salvador

was in a state of disrepair. In an edited volume documenting the intentions and implications of this planning organization, Ana Fernandes states the following about Mario Leal Ferreira's planning philosophy:

> "Firmly anchored in a vision of urbanism as science, where the prominence of sociology is highlighted, and guided by the ideals of cooperation and division of labor, the urbanist pointed out, in the unfolding of society's history, the need to 'restrict the liberties of each person' in order to establish an 'equilibrium of coexistence'." (Fernandes, 2014, p. 72, translation mine)

While this may seem like a socialist development project, based in the individual working for the good of the whole, Ferreira's urbanization plan subsumes differences to create a Salvador where the *soteropolitano*[40] is as malleable, usable, and replaceable as the landscape itself. As Ferreira states in his initial proposal to urbanize Salvador, "urbanism is a pressing social issue and can only be resolved through the utilization of cooperating parts, representative of all the sectors of human wisdom, jobs in service of the common good and anointed with the utmost humility and modesty" (Ferreira, 1942, cited in Fernandes, 2014, p. 73, translation mine). What happens, then, to those bodies that refuse to fulfill their designated function in the city, or are considered dysfunctional and thereby a hindrance to both social and infrastructural progress?

This disciplining of urban space, and the Black Bahian bodies that constitute it, has become emblematic of Salvador's urbanization efforts since EPUCS. While the links between urbanization and tourism were not distinct in the EPUCS era, former governor Antonio Carlos Magalhães (henceforth ACM) formalized these linkages by establishing partnerships between urban planners and the tourism industry. In 1973, the Secretary of Industry and Commerce proposed a plan to "preserve the touristic potential" of the orla in conjunction with BahiaTursa, the state tourism agency that, in the same year, shifted from solely strengthening Salvador's hotel sector to advising

[40] *Soteropolitano* is the name for people born and raised in the city of Salvador.

the revitalization of public spaces deemed essential to the tourist economy. The plan opens by contextualizing the current problems with the orla, providing a list of objectives to address them:

> *Characterized by an extensive stretch of usable beach space and recognizable scenic value, Bahia's beaches take on, alongside the cultural archive of the state, aspects for expansion for the influx of tourism.*
>
> *Certain stretches, however, at the mercy of their proximity to certain urban centers (Salvador, Ilhéus) or to new highways (BR-101, BA-099), are increasingly subjected to land speculation and disorderly occupations that threaten to diminish local values.*
>
> *The urgency to adopt measures that correct this situation moved the State Government of Bahia to institute, through Decree Nº 23.666, on September 4, 1973, the Coastal Maritime Deployment Program of the State of Bahia, with the following objectives:*
>
> *(i) Define a general policy for the treatment of the maritime coastline regarding its use, access and equipment;*
> *(ii) Discipline and regulate the occupation of the land, in successive phases, with the objective of preserving and valuing the scenic-recreative potential and environment of the space;*
> *(iii) Create an infrastructure capable of supporting the impact of tourist influx throughout the metropolitan region, respecting the intended use of the area as a space of leisure and recreation for the local population;*
> *(iv) Promote the restoration and recomposition of the landscape on the stretches most affected by the disorderly action of urban growth.*
>
> (Estado da Bahia, 1973, p. 1-2, translation mine)

Traces of Ferreira's spatial doctrine are apparent in this plan, created over 30 years after EPUCS. More explicit in its concerns for protecting Salvador's *touristscape* (Williams, 2014), this plan outlines (albeit codified) a multivalent reading of the orla: its state-sanctioned use, viable users, and prohibited usages. The *disorderly occupations* of the orla consist of unlicensed street vendors, low-income Bahians, and other Black/blackened bodies (Leu 2016) who threaten the moral and economic value of the coastline. The emphasis on touristic potential throughout the document also signals who the orla is built for: non-Bahian Brazilians of economic means, foreigners, and Bahian elites looking to consume *the cultural archive of the state* (read: Black culture and bodies). The

mention of respecting the local population should not be interpreted as an invitation for every Bahian to use the orla at their leisure; the differentiation between *local population* and *disorderly occupations*, good and bad citizen, position those Bahians deemed undesirable and threatening to the tourist economy as secondary to the aforementioned consumers. In other words, Bahians are expected to either have the means to consume on the orla, granting them unencumbered access to the coastline, or be consumable themselves, opening those at the limits of desire up to *discipline and regulation* at the hands of the government, police, and consumers. This development plan came to fruition in the 1980s (see figures 2.1 and 2.2), and continues to unfold in the present under ACM Neto, grandson of the governor under which this initial proposal was formed.

It is along these lines that the ambiguous entanglements (Williams 2014) of the orla are built into the urban landscape, a psychosexual spatialization that I unpack in the narratives to come. The subsequent two sections are a mixture of interview and personal narrative from my fieldwork in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Over the course of nine months, I interviewed 40 Black LGBTT Bahians (20 cisgender and 20 transgender/travesti individuals). The interviews consisted of two parts: 1) a conversation about the person's life in relation to race, gender and sexuality; and 2) the co-creation of a digital map that highlights the places in the city where they feel most (un)comfortable in relation to those identities. While the interviews were specifically about the intersections of race, gender and sexuality, all the participants talked about other salient life experiences that affect their ability to move freely throughout the city, such as colorism, classism, and passability. The narratives take place in two key neighborhoods along the orla that comprise the publicly-acknowledged, state-regulated LGBTT landscape of the city: Itapuã and Rio Vermelho. In the section on Itapuã, I explore the fraught relationship between Black trans Bahians and the beach, focusing on the double entendre of *comer* as a proxy for their assumed sexual

availability and commodification. Similarly, the section on Rio Vermelho analyzes how its designation as a "friendly" neighborhood for gay men elides the quotidian physical violence that Black LGBTT bodies experience. The conclusion will connect these narratives back to global capitalism, colonialism, and Western imperialism by asserting that the construction of these neighborhoods, and the positioning of Black LGBTT bodies within them, is in service to the fantasy of *Afro-paradise*: "a choreographed, theatrical performance between the state's celebration of black culture and the state's routine killing of the black body" (Smith, 2016, p. 3). I also introduce Salvador's periphery, a predominately-Black low-income space, as a Black futurist corrective to dominant configurations of race, gender, and sexuality in the city.

EAT, OR BE EATEN: THE POLITICS OF CONSUMPTION ON ITAPUÃ BEACH

I first met Thaís at the march for travestis and putas[41] on Brazilian Independence Day organized by *Casarão de Diversidade*, a government organization that I became acquainted with during my fieldwork. She stood out to me as a Black woman with straight, blonde hair who led many of the chants for the march. After getting her WhatsApp information from one of my friends at the organization, we set up a time to meet. However, before agreeing to the interview, she asked me a few questions, including what she should wear. Given that she did not know me well, and that the word *entrevista* has a formal ring to it in Portuguese, I reassured her that she could wear whatever made her most comfortable.

When the day came for us to meet, I walked to the bus stop near my house to pick her up. She was sporting the same blonde hair, a see-through crop top with a bra underneath, and some booty shorts to complete the look. I shouldn't have been surprised, but it would be dishonest not to admit that for a brief moment, I was shocked by the way she was dressed. While I loved her

[41] Derogatory term for cis-women sex workers, which has been reclaimed.

outfit, I suddenly became hyperaware of where we were. The neighborhood I was living in at the time, Brotas, is almost exclusively residential. As such, people are observant and critical of what you wear and who you are with, and they have no problem gesturing their thoughts to you through stares, whispers, and mocking sounds.

As we walked back to my place, we were greeted with a myriad of looks from complete strangers, some of whom may have seen me walking on the street previously, but otherwise had no idea who either of us were. The stares, some of disgust and others of intrigue, seemed to want confirmation of whether or not the stories in their minds were true. *They can't possibly be just friends. Is she a travesti who he paid to have sex with? How dare they walk together with such a vulgar appearance.* These were all the words the onlookers embodied through their gestures. What was only a 5-minute walk felt like an eternity for me, but Thaís, possibly accustomed to being stared at in those ways, never wavered in her conversation with me as we walked.

Once we arrived at my apartment, we started the interview. She mentioned that she works for the government, hence why she asked about the dress code for the interview. Thaís led the conversation with grace, answering every question I presented with additional context from the fullness of her life. As we transitioned into talking about spaces in the city where she felt (un)comfortable, she mentioned Itapuã beach. The neighborhood of Itapuã lies on the far eastside of Salvador, about a 20-minute drive from Lauro de Freitas (a city that most soteropolitanos would consider to be the limit of the Salvador metropolitan area). While very few of the people that I interviewed live in Itapuã, many of them, particularly the trans women and travestis, mentioned Itapuã beach as a space they went to regularly, experiencing various moments of joy and violence.

One afternoon, after a long work week, Thaís decided to have a relaxing day at Itapuã beach. Drinking a beer and eating some delicious food freshly prepared for her, the waiter came

up to Thaís and told her that an older man, sitting some ways away from her, had bought her a drink. Accepting his offering, Thaís continued enjoying her day off. After some time passed, the man gathered the courage to come up to her, asking her how much she cost. Thaís, responding with only the grace and patience that she could, told the man that she was not a sex worker, but if he ever wanted to have a real date, that they could arrange something in the future. She told me that he was so embarrassed that he bought her another drink and gave her his number, though he never responded when she called. "[Homens] nos vêem como uma comida barata que querem comer rápido, jogando os restos no lixo quando terminam" ([Men] see us as a cheap food they want to eat quickly, and then throw in the trash when they're done), she ended. The double entendre of the metaphor she provided, referring to herself as a food to be eaten/fucked (*comer* means both in Portuguese) by men at their leisure, was a powerful way to capture her experience.

Thaís contextualized the story I recount here by stating that, as a 35-year-old Black woman, community organizer, and employee of the government, she is in a season of her life in which she wants to settle down. But as the story shows, Black trans women and travestis are expected to always be violable and sexually available, never growing out of their "inherent" promiscuity and sexual licentiousness. What is to be appreciated about Thaís's response is that, while she does not identify as a travesti or sex worker (though she has performed sex work in the past, both in Brazil and Italy), she never once disparaged the women that she considers to be her sisters. As with the march on Brazilian Independence Day, Thaís asserts her rights to her body while refusing to undermine the ways in which other women use theirs. She talks back to the notion that any transfeminine body on Itapuã beach, like the delicious food she ate, is available for purchase, while also recognizing and honoring the presence of sex work in that space.

***

Itapuã is one of the few spaces in Salvador where the presence of trans women and travestis is expected, albeit complicated by a culture of cruising and solicitation of sex work. The experience in Itapuã that Thaís recounts marks a geography of desire in multiple ways. Most obviously, her encounter with the straight man on the beach exemplifies how Black transfeminine bodies must always have sexual value to be legible in the city. Unlike other neighborhoods in Salvador, where the trans population is either limited to residents or heavily policed, Itapuã represents a place where trans women and travestis have been incorporated into the urban landscape rather than eradicated from it. Furthermore, Thaís's response to the man's assumption that she is a sex worker was strategic. In addition to standing up for her travesti sisters by refusing to disparage them, Thaís was aware that anything more than a mild-mannered response to his claims could lead to physical violence. Given that Brazil is the country with the highest rates of trans murders in the world, alongside the all-too-common use of demonizing and dehumanizing rhetoric to justify assaults on trans bodies, trans women and travestis often need to use non-threatening modes of resistance to survive. As such, Thaís uses her personability to not only assuage the embarrassment of her suitor (and subsequently, guilting him into purchasing her another drink), but to avoid the violence that a more direct, less forgiving confrontation would bring. Thaís imparts this survival strategy, of preemptively responding to transphobic violence with a poised firmness of character, through her mentorship of other young trans women and travestis in her neighborhood of Pernambues, a fact she mentioned in the context of her community-based organizing work.

The scene described exemplifies the very intervention that I want to pose in previous attempts at spatializing desire: the issue is not that desire is more than the sexual or the erotic, but that certain bodies (in this case, Black LGBTT Bahians) are only legible through their ability to be incorporated into the sexual and affective economies of a space. For a Black trans woman to be at

the beach, relaxing after a hard work week, exceeds the constitutive limits of her geographic possibilities, allowing a man to find it appropriate to approach her as a sex worker rather than a beach patron. Even her disruption of the space, telling the man that she is not for sale, is done in a way that does not dismantle the overall significations of the neighborhood as a space of trans sexual encounter. This is not to say that Thaís has been coopted by these logics, but rather that she has found ways to navigate them that simultaneously holds men (and by extension, the neighborhood) accountable to her desires for rest and relaxation while recognizing the place she has been forced to occupy in relation to their desires for her body. By reading this scene through the framework of geographies of desire, we become attentive to the overlapping, at times contradictory, constructions of urban space that position Black transfemmes as objects of consumption, as well as their multifaceted, agentive responses to that positioning.

MY FRIEND DIED HERE: READING PLEASURE AND PAIN IN RIO VERMELHO

On a Thursday afternoon in October, I invited my friend, Rayane, to hang out in Rio Vermelho. A tall, skinny Black Bahian woman from Nordeste de Amaralina, Rayane had successfully changed her name and sex on her *registro civil*,[42] a small, yet important step in being officially recognized as a woman by the Brazilian nation. To celebrate, we ate at *Acarajé da Regina*, a food stand next to the parking lot and side street that separates Regina from the famous *Acarajé da Dinha*. Eating an *acarajé*[43] and drinking coca cola, we talked about the process of changing her *registro civil* and the future steps she would need to take to change her other

[42] The *Cartório de Registro Civil* (Office of Civil Registry) is responsible for a variety of documents related to one's citizenship in the Brazilian nation, including birth/death certificates, adoption and marriage.
[43] Acarajé is a traditional Bahian food made of black eyed-peas that are peeled, made into dough and fried in palm oil. The food is of West African origin and was sold by enslaved women who were, at times, able to purchase their freedom as a result.

documents (birth certificate, healthcare, etc.). Although it was merely the beginning of a much longer process, Rayane was happy to have overcome one challenge in the legal recognition of herself as a woman.

After we finished eating, we crossed the street to the plaza of *Acarajé da Dinha*. I asked Rayane if she wanted to sit and drink a little before heading home. "*Você que sabe*" (It's up to you), she said, with little conviction. I was going to ask her again, but as it was getting late, we looked for a waiter to take us to a table. Rayane drinking a beer and me a caipirinha, we continued to talk about boys, parties, and other lighthearted subjects. In the middle of a pause in our conversation, however, Rayane told me something that I will never forget: *I always get sad here, because I remember when my friend died.*

Lalesca D'Capory, a 24-year-old Black travesti who sold cellphone accessories throughout the city, was killed during the first week of August in 2018, two weeks after her birthday. While I already knew this, and about Rayane's friendship with Lalesca, her words came as a shock to my system. I felt so ashamed to have brought her to a bar so close to the beach where Lalesca's body had been found, floating in the Atlantic. Rayane did not say this comment to make me feel bad, as we continued talking and laughing for the rest of the evening. She did so to pose an intervention in a neighborhood that, due to its burgeoning gay nightlife and delicious foods, is exclusively seen as enjoyable for bodies like ours. She forced myself, and the neighborhood of Rio Vermelho, to hold space for both the pain and pleasure that she felt in that physical and temporal moment, honoring the memory of her fallen friend and creating a new one in me.

Rio Vermelho is known as the hub of gay nightlife in Salvador. While there are other neighborhoods that both formally and informally attract a LGBTT public, Rio Vermelho has been designated by both soteropolitanos and the government as the new gayborhood of Salvador. Unlike

its predecessors in the historic center of Salvador, Rio Vermelho is more akin to the global gay culture of consumerism: a high-priced, fast-paced, hypersexual space of same-sex desire. As such, most of the people who participate in the formal, protected spaces of gay nightlife in Rio Vermelho are upper-class white Brazilians, foreigners and Brazilian tourists. That said, Black LGBTT Bahians also participate in the nightscape of Rio Vermelho; while very few find themselves attending the clubs (unless they are performers, DJs, promoters, or other invited guests), many end up hanging out along the orla, buying cheap cans of beer and bottles of catuaba (a cheap red wine) from street vendors, the orla transforms into a public, free meeting space for Black LGBTT Bahians who would otherwise be priced out of accessing the gay nightlife of Rio Vermelho.

The spatialization of Rio Vermelho speaks to both the physical and affective proximity of pleasure and pain for Black LGBTT Bahians who frequent the neighborhood. Rayane and I were sitting no more than 70 meters from the beach where Lalesca's body had been found, and no more than 50 meters from the orla that, while not filled with Black LGBTT bodies at that moment, represents a space of comfort for this community. I mention these distances to emphasize the precarity of Black LGBTT being in Rio Vermelho; the fact that Lalesca's body was found in such close proximity to these spaces of Black LGBTT joy is not a coincidence. The orla, unlike the gay clubs of Rio Vermelho that charge 40 reais to enter, is not a protected space. While Black LGBTT Bahians are free to enjoy one another's company on the orla, they are also free to experience anti-Black LGBTT violence at any moment, both at the hands of other patrons of the neighborhood and military police. The characterization of Rio Vermelho as a gayborhood allows the Bahian government, elite soteropolitanos and non-Bahian visitors to understand Lalesca's death as an episode of violence rather than a calling card, a manifestation of structural anti-Black LGBTT violence. Carrying the full weight of Lalesca's death in a neighborhood, state, and nation that

refuses to recognize it as more than a moment, Rayane's utterance, *I remember when my friend died*, is a palimpsestic embodiment, a corporeal extension of Afro-paradise: vocalizing the erasure of her pain and her "etching over" as just another Black body indulging in the pleasures of Rio Vermelho's nightscape (Smith, 2016, p. 176).

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Geographies of desire shape the architectural and corporeal landscape of Black LGBTT Bahians in Rio Vermelho. Lalesca's death, which was ruled a homicide by the police due to a gash in her neck, is one of many examples of the Black LGBTT body in pain that haunt this neighborhood. Of Black LGBTT murders that remain unresolved, living on through the transference of trauma to those who, like Rayane, see themselves in/as the victims of said violence. Of Black LGBTT bodies that, despite their affective labor in making Rio Vermelho's nightscape, will always be marked for dead. During my undergraduate fieldwork in 2016, Leonardo Moura, a 30-year-old Black gay student and club promoter, was killed upon leaving San Sebastian, an upscale gay nightclub in Rio Vermelho. His body, found two days after being brutalized, was encountered on the same beach where Lalesca's body would be discovered floating in the ocean some years later. News reports stated that the homicide must have been homophobic in nature, given that Leonardo's assailants did not take any of his belongings (G1 BA, 2016). What is missed by this characterization of the crime, however, is that his inherent disposability as a Black body is what allowed the homophobic act to take place. The examples are few and far between in which white Brazilians or foreigners are the victims of anti-LGBTT violence in Rio Vermelho; as with all sectors of the city, bodies deemed as being anything but Black and Bahian are seen as in need of protection at all costs. Part of that protection is reminding the Black body of its fungibility via seemingly disconnected moments of violence. To see, as Christen Smith argues, anti-Black genocide as the repetitive performance of violence across space-time is to see Lalesca and

Leonardo, despite almost three years in between their deaths, as victims of structural anti-Black LGBTT violence (Smith, 2016, p. 18). In this sense, Rio Vermelho is built simultaneously on the pleasure produced by Black LGBTT bodies (e.g. Leonardo's work as a club promoter) and their disciplining through performances of violence that lie "somewhere in between the passive neglect of letting die and the intentional, political acts of state killing" (Smith, 2016, p. 41).[44]

The spectral presence of Black LGBTT death in Rio Vermelho, one of the few spaces in the city where non-normative bodies have been able to carve out space for themselves, positions the neighborhood as a geography of desire that is fraught with contradiction. By reading Rio Vermelho as a public-private space in which Black LGBTT Bahians create moments of joy (e.g. occupying the orla, promoting nightclubs, enjoying drinks and food together) amidst their disciplining through the repetition of physical violence that buttresses the homonormative logics of the neighborhood, we come to understand the ephemerality of desire as a requisite for belonging. The sexual and aesthetic value of Black LGBTT Bahians, as well as their seemingly disconnected killing, maiming and humiliation across space-time, is what allows Rio Vermelho to exist as a gayborhood. Put another way, geographies of desire are not simply a matter of which characteristics a Black LGBTT person must embody to access space, but rather an attention to how desire, as the foundation for how non-normative bodies are read spatially, is fickle and unstable. It creates the illusion that Lalesca and Leonardo's deaths are unimaginable, singular moments of violence, when in actuality they exist as part of the repertoire of actions that tell Black LGBTT Bahians that they are always Other, even in spaces that are built upon the very sexual and gender deviance that they embody. I call upon Lalesca and Leonardo here not to subject them to the violence of being "made useful or instructive," but rather to honor their legacies by suggesting that

[44] Important to note that I view state killing not just as anti-Black police violence, but as any killings in service of the white supremacist, heteropatriarchal nation-state.

they live on with/through the Black LGBTT Bahians that choose to continue taking up space in Rio Vermelho despite (or perhaps, in spite) of knowing the violence that continues to occur there (Hartman, 2008, p. 14). Geographies of desire, therefore, must answer Christina Sharpe's call "to attend to, care for, comfort, and defend, those already dead, those dying, and those living lives cosigned to the possibility of always-imminent death, life lived in the presence of death…" (2016, p. 38) in order to ameliorate the violence of evoking their deaths. As with Rayane's moment of mourning during our night out, this section is a pause to consider that the line between pleasure and pain, especially for Black LGBTT folks, is paper thin.

PRACTICES IN BLACK LGBTT FUTURITY AND FURTIVITY

Brazil is caught up in a sociopolitical moment, both nationally and internationally, in which the Black LGBTT body is under threat. As such, it would be remiss not to position these vignettes, and my analysis of them, within the context of a global Black transfemicide.[45] In *Unerased*, a report released in December 2016 on the rate of transgender murders in the United States, Meredith Talusan and her team present the harrowing statistic that 72% of the known transgender and gender non-conforming murders from 2010 to 2016 were of "Black trans women and gender non-conforming femmes" (Talusan et. al., 2016). The report goes on to explain characterizations of Black trans women in the media, evoking Devin Diamond to highlight the perpetual lack of care for the Black trans dead and dying.[46] It is worth mentioning, too, that the Brazilian statistics are similar. In their 2018 annual report on trans and travesti murders in Brazil, the *Associação*

[45] "Transfemicide" was translated from *transfemicidio*, a term used in Brazil and other parts of Latin America to highlight the transphobic and femmephobic logics that facilitate trans murders.
[46] Devin (Goddess) Diamond, a 20-year-old Black trans woman from New Orleans, was found bludgeoned and burned in an abandoned car. Unable to identify her body, the autopsy report identified her as a male, which the family confirmed despite knowing she was trans. Conversations with friends also revealed that Devin was taking hormonal therapy, which was not tested for during the autopsy.

Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais (ANTRA) declared that 82% of the known cases were of Black and Brown trans women and travestis.[47] The violence against Black trans bodies is not limited to a singular moment of physical violence. It consists of a repertoire of actions across space-time meant to erase the Black trans body in/after death: misgendering/misnaming, victim blaming and dishonoring the dead through the circulation of pre-transition photos, to name a few.[48] When understood in this way, Devin and Lalesca's deaths, and the statistics that accompany them, become legible as transfemicidal; their repetition and resonance across cultural, temporal, and spatial borders is evidence of the anti-Black, transphobic, and femmephobic logics through which the Black transfeminine body is subjected to violence.

I ground geographies of desire in the experiences of Black trans Bahian women in part to reveal how global capitalism, Western imperialism, and colonialism are maintained through the appropriation, disciplining, and eradication of non-normative bodies. Global gay consumerism, sex tourism, and the ongoing erasure of trans existence are all made possible through structural and physical anti-Black LGBTT violence, which is bolstered by the appropriation of Black LGBTT cultural and affective labor. Underlying the construction of the gayborhood, for example, are logics whereby certain bodies are wanted and protected, while others are regulated and, when deemed unwanted, erased. The refusal of local government, Brazilian elites and foreigners to remember Rio Vermelho as a space that systemically kills Black LGBTT folks, instead profiting

[47] A note on the word "Brown": *pardo*, or Brown, is a racial identity marker that has been used in Brazil since Portuguese colonialization. As such, the term has represented a contested space that is not-quite-Black, but is often picked up by Black Brazilians with lighter skin. While ANTRA does not provide a definition of the racial category, they do contextualize the aforementioned statistic by stating that Black trans women and travestis make up the majority of sex workers Brazil, and as such experience higher rates of physical violence and murder. For more, see Benevides and Nougeira, 2018, p. 21.

[48] While the specific examples provided are my own, the use of repertoire here is derivative of Diana Taylor (2003) and Christen Smith (2016), as they both analyze performance as an embodied practice through which violence can be enacted, displaced, and refracted.

from the cultural work of Black LGBTT DJs, *transformistas*[49] and club promoters (and, I would add, the affective labor of Black LGBTT joy being witnessed on the orla), reifies Afro-paradise and allows the aforementioned global formations of domination to persist, uninterrogated. Ignoring the impacts of race, gender and sexuality on global formations (and vice-versa) is to commit another violence, one that positions what is happening in the gayborhood of Rio Vermelho and the outskirts of New Orleans as disjunctive, episodic acts of violence rather than assemblages with transnational resonance (Puar, 2007, xi).

In future work, I will delve into how geographies of desire manifest in the lives of Black trans men and Black non-heterosexual cisgender folks. While I provide some evidence of these geographies in the sections above, more attention needs to be given as to where they, along with the geographies of Black trans women and travestis, converge and diverge. Furthermore, this chapter is meant to foster deeper collaboration between Black queer studies and geography, particularly around the topic of desire. Here, I emphasize the interplay between desire and violence not to be provocative, but instead to unveil the severity of the subject at hand. To be (un)desired in space is not simply a matter of inexplicable personal preferences or undiscerning passion. Desire is, at its core, a spatial tool used to organize non-normative bodies in terms of their usefulness to the affective economies present. At best, it is a mechanism that can be leveraged for survival in an otherwise limiting urban landscape. At worst, and sadly more common, is the deployment of desire to keep the Black LGBTT body in flux, always marked for dead, even in spaces of relative pleasure.[50]

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[49] *Transformistas* are male performers, similar to drag queens, who take on a woman persona in their artistry. Some prominent examples in Brazilian popular culture would be Gloria Groove, Pabllo Vittar, and Lia Clark.

[50] While my work is not explicitly on police violence, it is useful here to turn to Jaime Alves's work on the (il)legibility of Black death in São Paulo (Alves 2018). I argue that police violence is an extension of the desire framework in that it cleans up/disappears those bodies that are deemed a threat to the safety and enjoyment of the white cisheteropatriarchal majority.

In the wake of these impositions on Black LGBTT spatiality, what are we to do? To return to McKittrick and Santana, how can networks of care among Black trans women, and Black LGBTT folks writ large, gesture towards a more "humanly workable" (McKittrick, 2006, p. 141) geography of Black LGBTT being in Salvador? In the final chapter, I use Saidiya Hartman's work on Black women's intimate lives in Philadelphia and New York City to position Salvador's periphery as a space where Black gender and sexuality is practiced, negotiated, and accepted as intrinsic to the sociocultural fabric of the city. I analyze the music videos and Instagram page of Nininha Problemática, the first drag queen in Bahian pagode, as evidence of the real and imagined geographies of Black LGBTT identity in the periphery. More than displacing the notion that low-income Black folks are more prejudiced than the average person, I argue that these neighborhoods, while not without their problems, open up possibilities for acceptance, freedom of expression, and coalition building that state-sanctioned LGBTT space does not. Placing Nininha's cultural work in conversation with other Black femme, trans, and travesti artists from the periphery, I argue for the creation of an alternate *cultural archive of the state*, one that attends to the untold stories of Salvador's Black LGBTT population across space-time.

Appendix B

2.1 and 2.2 Urban infrastructural plans and land use/occupation of the orla, respectively (Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador, 1986)

Chapter Three – *A Voz do Gueto*: Nininha Problemática and Envisioning Black LGBTT Bahian Futures

You're Here Because of Us: Black LGBTT Placemaking in Salvador da Bahia

For Day of the Dead last year, I attended *Elas Não Morreram*,[51] a drag show commemorating the 5-year anniversary of *Coletivo das Liliths*. The celebration was held in a bar and cultural space on Rua Carlos Gomes, a historically LGBTT street in the center of Salvador that, due to ongoing gentrification, has attracted a contingent of conservative residents seeking to displace the dissident bodies that have created home there. During my first experience in the space, a birthday party for my friend and founder of the Black LGBTT collective, *Afrobapho*, the residents of the neighboring building (about 5 stories taller than the bar) continuously dropped bags of a heavy substance onto the roof. Some said it was ice, others said it was rocks or bricks, but after the fourth or fifth bag was dropped, a portion of the roof caved in. Although no one was severely injured, the fear generated by this act of anti-LGBTT terror, and the subsequent costs of fixing the roof, served as a reminder that we were not welcome. In the wake of this violence, *Elas Não Morreram* also served as a corrective, asserting that despite all that has happened to us, both inside and outside of that space, we did not (and will not) perish.

Following an opening by the indigenous artist collective, *Aldeia*, was a performance by Kaysha Kutnner, a Black drag queen and comedian. Her set consisted of several lip syncs interspersed with monologues poking fun at people in the crowd and Brazilian life in general. One of my favorite monologues was her response to Jair Bolsonaro's policy regarding the right to bear arms (Mazui and Barbiéri, 2019). Kaysha expressed her enthusiastic support of his decree, claiming that we would finally have the means to protect ourselves from anti-LGBTT violence.

[51] The title of the event translates to "They Did not Die", with the "they" (elas) referring to women and femmes.

She proceeded to simulate how this newfound expression of LGBTT rights would play out, miming the removal of firearms from her wig, leg and various orifices of her body to protect herself from the machistas (whom she evoked throughout her monologue). While we were all aware that Bolsonaro's policy was not meant to protect us, her defiant performance of the LGBTT possibilities the policy presented had everyone in the space crying of laughter. Kaysha followed up her monologue perfectly by lip syncing Linn da Quebrada's *Bixa Preta*, a song that advocates self-defense and demands respect for Black LGBTT folk from the favela, particularly Black femmes, trans and travesti individuals.

Towards the end of her performance, Kaysha posed a serious, yet necessary intervention in the space: she forced us to take a moment to recognize that we would not be there if it were not for the *bichas afeminadas, sapatonas, trans e travestis* who are so unapologetically themselves and, despite violences from both inside and outside of the LGBTT community, continue to carve out space for us to be ourselves. As she continued her intervention, she noticed me sitting in the front, pointing out that these populations of the LGBTT community make it possible for me to have my eyebrow piercing. I felt honored that Kaysha pointed me out in that moment, as she vocalized something that I had only begun to understand towards the end of my fieldwork. We were in that bar, literally maintained by the financial and affective labor of a butch lesbian and her femme wife, but also sustained by the cultural production of Black and Indigenous LGBTT performance collectives and individuals such as herself, precisely because they were committed to being so relentlessly and resiliently themselves. By singling me out for my eyebrow piercing, Kaysha also reminded us that this affective and cultural labor is not limited to the space of the bar, but is present in our aesthetic choices and expressions of sexual liberation and unbound gender presentation in our daily lives.

The third and final chapter is a continuation of the intervention that Kaysha made that evening. It is indebted to the affective, cultural, and sensual labor of Black femmes, butches, trans, and travesti folk across Latin America, whose refusal to be anything but themselves makes this works possible, allows me to write this thesis, and (I would venture to say) allows each and every one of us to be ourselves, no matter how normative or not our presentations or identifications. It is driven by the belief that dissident bodies can speak to more than the categories of difference that establish them as Other. And, most importantly, it talks back to the homonormative logics (Duggan, 2003) outlined in the previous chapter, establishing some LGBTT bodies as passable and acceptable, while others remain as repositories for the disgust, insecurities, and deviant predilections of others.

A Voz do Gueto (The Voice of the Ghetto) is a call for accountability, honoring the cultural work of those who, despite their relegation to the physical and ideological margins of society, have made exceptional contributions to broaden our understandings of Blackness, class, gender, sexuality, and spatiality. It is an homage to the intellectual, sexual, sensual, and emotional labors of Black LGBTT Bahians in the past and present, attending to how their practices in Black gender and sexuality present an alternative future for Black LGBTT culture and community in the city, one that is not reliant on state-sanctioned LGBTT spaces. Taking up José Esteban Muñoz's call to "think of cultural workers…as not only culture makers but also theory producers" (Muñoz, 1999, p. 32), I analyze the career of Nininha Problemática, the first drag queen in Bahian pagode.[52] Through her personal story, Instagram page, and music videos, Nininha and her production team promote an image of the *periferia* (low-income neighborhood) that positions Black LGBTT identity as integral to both its spatialization and sociocultural production. I begin this analysis by

[52] Pagode is a Brazilian style of music derived from samba. For a thorough exploration of the racial, gendered, and sexual politics of the genre in Bahia, refer to Pinho, 2015.

situating Nininha's career within the current wave of LGBTT Brazilian singers, specifically the intersections of race, class, and globalization that have unevenly impacted this subset of the Brazilian music industry. After providing the necessary context and terminology, I use a mixture of formal interviews and informal encounters with Nininha to demonstrate how she embodies the periferia (periphery) through her artistry, establishing it as the new normal for Black gender and sexuality. The final sections of the chapter attend to her use of social media and music videos, centering the periferia (and all its cultural iterations) as a site that is produced by and in relation to the Black LGBTT body. I read Nininha's cultural work in tandem with Saidiya Hartman's book on Black women's intimate lives in New York and Philadelphia during the Great Migration, tracing the transnational resonances of Black gender and sexual experimentality as a phenomenon tied to the (re)production of low-income space throughout the African diaspora.

FABETY BOCA DE MOTOR AND OTHER "MINOR FIGURES" OF SALVADOR'S PERIPHERY

Quando eu tinha 5 anos eu entrei na capoeira
Minha mãe olhou pra mim "meu filho cuidado com a rasteira"
Completando 10 anos resolvi fazer balé
Meu pai desconfiado "esse menino vai ser mulher"

Chegando aos 15 anos resolvi comemorar
O povo já dizia ele vai se revelar
Completando 20 anos resolvi jogar basquete
Agora eu sou reconhecida como a rainha dos moleques

Agora estou com 27 tenho historico em Salvador
Sou Fabety do Raghatoni a boca de motor

When I was 5 years old I started capoeira
My mom looked at me "my son be careful with the *rasteira*[53]"
When I turned 10 I decided to do ballet
My dad suspicious "this boy will become a woman"

At 15 years old I decided to celebrate
People were already saying "he's gonna come out"
Turning 20 I decided to play basketball
Now I'm known as the queen of the *moleques*[54]

Now I'm 27 and have a history in Salvador
I am Fabety of Raghatoni the *boca de motor*[55]

[53] Move in capoeira where someone sweeps their leg as if to trip their opponent. His mother's warning is most likely in reference to the jokes other kids would play on him because of his effeminate mannerisms.
[54] *Moleque* refers to low-income Black and Brown boys of a certain aesthetic (thuggish, sly, etc.). While the literal translation of moleque is just *boy*, it is often used negatively and carries racial-gendered-classed connotations.
[55] Euphemism for oral sex, which becomes clear through the synonyms that Fabety provides throughout the song (e.g. boca de pramil (mouth of pramil), *pramil* referring to a drug that helps with erectile disfunction.

In February of 2012, Fábio Santana dos Santos, popularly known as Fabety, released "Boca de Motor" with Bahian pagode band, *Raghatoni*. With its upbeat samba rhythms and witty lyrics, "Boca de Motor" recounts Fabety's life as a *bixa preta* (Black femme) from the periphery of Salvador da Bahia. The first verse of "Boca de Motor," reproduced above, uses overt references to Fabety's femininity and subtle references to assumptions about his gender and sexuality to assemble a playful portrait of Black LGBTT life in Salvador's low-income neighborhoods. Like many of the Black LGBTT Bahians I interviewed, the signs of Fabety's budding gender and sexuality presented themselves early. From his mother's worries about the bullying he may be subjected to in capoeira, to his father's anxieties around his son practicing ballet, Fabety succinctly captures the childhoods and adolescences of many Black LGBTT Bahians. The story becomes more risqué when, at 20 years old, Fabety decided to start playing basketball, effectively becoming the "queen of the *moleques*," a title that, when paired with the allusions to oral sex throughout the song, is most likely in reference to him sleeping with many of the attractive, dark-skinned, masculine men he played basketball with. In exposing, embracing, and positively refracting the assumptions made about his gender and sexuality from a young age, Fabety succeeds in not only telling his story, but that of other Black LGBTT folks living in Salvador's periphery. As he stated in an interview with MTV Brazil shortly after the song was released, Fabety Boca de Motor is "*the voice of Salvador's ghetto*" (Fabete Boca de Motor 2012; see figure 3.1).

Fabety's presence in the city, however, extends beyond this song. In addition to running for the position of city councilman that same year, Fabety is an involved and

respected member of his community in *Cidade Baixa* (Lower City). Working as a soccer referee, organizing his neighborhood Pride celebration (*Parada da Diversidade*), and running food drives during the holidays are some examples of the community work that Fabety has done since his moment of fame in 2012. While "Boca de Motor" is an important addition to the Black LGBTT cultural archive being assembled throughout these chapters, I wish to delve deeper into the lives and legacies of *minor figures*, such as Fabety, who have paved the way for the current generation of Black LGBTT Bahian artists, activists, and innovators. In *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, Hartman refers to minor figures as contorted, often nameless depictions of Black folks that are created in an attempt to erase our subjectivities (2019, p. 15). I would like to extend Hartman's definition of the minor figure by suggesting the following: While the names and lives of Black LGBTT Bahians may be more accessible in the present, what is to stop them from falling into obscurity like so many of those before them (e.g. Xica Manicongo)? Even though social media, the visual arts, and other technologies have made it easier for us to archive our own existence, the threat of perceived unimportance still haunts the (im)possibilities of Black LGBTT memory. Even amongst soteropolitanos, many people do not know Fabety beyond "Boca de Motor"; the only readily available information about him are his Instagram page, several video interviews, and the ephemeral archive of friends and family that know him personally. To be a minor figure is not to be unknown or unimportant, it is to be a representation of a structure of being beyond that which has been ascribed to you. It is to exceed the limits of history and the archive by embodying more than dominant society can fathom.

Fabety Boca de Motor is one of many Black LGBTT minor figures from Salvador's periphery that precede Nininha Problemática. I use "periphery" (from the Portuguese "periferia") to reference the low-income neighborhoods of Salvador da Bahia. It is a racialized, classed term that demarcates not only where low-income people live, but what they look like and *how* they occupy space (e.g. multigenerational homes, limited privacy, and proximity to crime).[56] As with many Brazilian cities, and other rapidly gentrifying cities in the Americas, the periphery is not always peripheral; low-income, "informal" neighborhoods are often situated alongside or within upper-class neighborhoods. To return to the case studies of the previous chapter, Thaís and Rayane's neighborhoods, Pernambues and Nordeste de Amaralina, are both considered part of Salvador's periphery and exist in close proximity to the upper-class neighborhoods of Caminho das Árvores and Pituba. Like the "minor" in minor figure, periphery should not be read as a marker of unimportance, but rather a socio-spatial positioning that renders Black and low-income bodies ungeographic (McKittrick, 2006, x). The periphery, and all its associated technologies of proximity, is synonymous with the urban slums and ghettos throughout the Americas, spaces that reveal "all the ways black folks create life and make bare need into an arena of elaboration" (Hartman, 2019, p.6).

My purpose in locating the nexus of Black gender and sexual difference in the periphery is threefold. Firstly, I further displace the notion that state-sanctioned LGBTT space is the only way of knowing about non-normative bodies within the city. As I note in

[56] For more information on the "blackening" properties of low-income space in Brazil, see Leu 2016.

Chapter Two, these spaces are fraught with contradiction for Black LGBTT Bahians, built on and through their consumption and death. While state-sanctioned LGBTT spaces are *usable spaces* leveraged by the Black LGBTT community through "the creative labor of appropriation and re-appropriation that is central to the processes of black queer self-making" (Livermon, 2014, p. 510), there is a burgeoning movement to re-center the periphery as a site of Black LGBTT cultural production. Secondly, I believe that Black LGBTT cultural work presents a potential corrective to the regional conflicts discussed in previous chapters. While *transformistas*[57] such as Pabllo Vittar and Glória Groove have gained international acclaim for their solo careers, collaborations between LGBTT artists from Northern and Southern Brazil have tested the limits of regional and racial biases around artistic capacity. Thirdly, I connect the resonant performances of Black gender and sexual experimentality in low-income spaces across the Americas, arguing that much of what we know about Black gender and sexuality is informed by the practices in culture, survival, and futurity[58] happening in these spaces. In conversation with Hartman's work, I show how the periphery, the slum, the ghetto, the projects, and all other iterations of low-income Black life are spatially and temporally linked. Like the deaths of Lalesca D'Capory and Devin Diamond discussed in Chapter Two, the cultural work of Fabety, Nininha, and

[57] *Transformista* is a Latin American term for people who dress in clothing of the opposite sex, but do not see themselves as a part of the gender associated with that form of dress. While it has its derogatory usages, transformista is widely used in Brazil to describe performers that have a persona separate from their actual person. This is sometimes used interchangeably with drag queen.

[58] My engagement with futurity is largely indebted to the late José Esteban Muñoz, who coined the term *queer futurity* to describe how "queerness is always on the horizon" (11). By practices in futurity, then, I mean the ways in which Black queer and trans folks living in low-income neighborhoods are envisioning, living in, and striving towards futures that have been denied to them through capitalism, anti-Blackness, and other systems of oppression.

other Black LGBTT Bahians are linked to practices in Black queer elaboration, experimentation, and joy happening across the African Diaspora.

The remainder of the chapter highlights the ways in which Nininha Problemática centers Salvador's periphery in her artistry, (re)producing an image of Black low-income space that is constituted by and through the Black LGBTT Bahian body. After a brief description of my relationship with Nininha, I conduct an audiovisual analysis of both her Instagram page and YouTube channel. In addition to detailing the content and curation of her social media, I provide an in-depth analysis of two videos that evince the relationship between Black low-income space and Black LGBTT identity: 1) Nininha's participation in the #InMyFeelingsChallenge and 2) the music video for "Quem Manda," a Brazilian homage to the Stonewall riots. In focusing on two videos whose local, national, and transnational resonances are easily legible, I read Nininha's characterization of the periphery as an alternative racial-gendered-sexual geography of the city. In her capacity as cultural worker, Nininha collectivizes and performs this alternative geography of Black LGBTT identity for a diverse audience, presenting a possible future for Black LGBTT Bahian life and cultural production in the city that is not tied to economies of consumption that exploit the sexual, affective, and cultural labor of this community.

NININHA PROBLEMÁTICA AND THE POLITICS OF PLACEMAKING IN SALVADOR'S PERIPHERY

At the beginning of my Fulbright year, my colleague and I attended a concert held behind Shopping da Bahia, the second-oldest shopping center in Brazil.[59] The headliner of the concert was Attooxxa, a Bahian band that mixes electronic/dance beats with traditional pagode rhythms. I became familiar with their music while I was writing my research prospectus the previous year. Afrobapho, one of the collectives that I worked with for my undergraduate thesis, used the song "Elas Gostam (Popa da Bunda)" as the background music for their artistic intervention in Feira São Joaquim, an open-air market in Lower City. The song ended up becoming a Carnaval hit, leading to Attooxxa's subsequent rise to fame. While I did not realize it at the time, Afrobapho's video was also my first exposure to Nininha; as she rolls away on a metallic flatbed cart, Nininha stares at the camera, which switches to a closeup frame as she winks at us.

As my colleague and I entered the venue, my eyes were immediately drawn to a tall, slender, dark-skinned figure wearing a neon wig. Nininha was a fortuitous presence in a sea of Black heterosexuality. While I did not intend to approach her, I was pleasantly surprised when one of my friends, Eduardo, was amongst the group of people hanging around her. After speaking with Eduardo, I found out that he was part of Nininha's production team as a professional photographer. The day after the show, I messaged Eduardo to see if he could put me in touch with Nininha as a potential participant for my mapping project. Once he sent me her information, I gathered up the courage to speak with

[59] Formerly known as Shopping Iguatemi.

this presence that had unknowingly captured my attention since the initial phases of this project. When I contacted Nininha about interviewing her, the first question she asked me was whether or not she needed to come dressed *as* Nininha. This question was a precursor to the content of our interview; while we did follow the standard format of the mapping interview, our conversation largely focused on the man behind the persona.

Nininha Problemática is a drag persona created and performed by Digo Santtos, a gay Black man from Sete de Abril, a neighborhood in the *suburbana* region of the city where most of the periphery is located. During our interview, Digo mentioned that Nininha is a well-researched, carefully curated persona. In order to prevent Nininha from becoming a misogynistic caricature of Black womanhood, Digo and his team turned to Black feminism and the Black women around them (personal communication, June 1, 2018). The results of this research were the creation of an authentic, effeminate, Black Bahian woman from Salvador's periphery. One of the main taglines that Digo uses to describe Nininha is "the first drag queen in Bahian pagode," a title that summarizes the key intervention that Nininha poses in the Brazilian music industry (personal communication, June 1, 2018). Her participation in a masculine genre of Brazilian music, one that largely still excludes women, sets Nininha apart from many other drag singers in the country, who are primarily pop and funk artists. In embracing a Bahian genre of music originating in low-income Black spaces, Digo further situates Nininha in Salvador's periphery.

Digo also stated that, more than anything, Nininha was his attempt at softening the hearts and minds of those around him. In describing his childhood, Digo mentioned various incidents of bullying and domestic abuse that resulted from his effeminate mannerisms.

However, he was careful not to disparage low-income Black folks in describing these incidents; in response to these hurtful experiences, Digo asserted that "activism must start in our homes" (personal communication, June 1, 2018). More than a love of drag and singing, Nininha Problemática was devised from a need that Digo perceived in his community: recognition of and respect for Black LGBTT people. This impetus led to the creation of a figure that has made a substantial difference in Sete de Abril, Salvador, and Brazil as a whole.

The majority of Nininha's artist-activist work is done via social media and public appearances. Digo mentioned that when he walks around his neighborhood dressed as Nininha, both children and adults treat this persona with love and respect. He went so far as to say that, despite his childhood traumas, his family has come to accept Digo and his work as Nininha with open arms. Nininha was also invited back to one of the schools that Digo attended, an evangelical private school, to participate on a panel (personal communication, June 1, 2018). While there are many debates within Brazil's activist community about the limits of representation, Nininha is a clear example of how critical exposure to non-normative genders and sexualities can make a tangible difference in how Black LGBTT folks are treated in their daily lives.

Nininha's Instagram page and YouTube channel are other venues through which Digo and his team bring Black LGBTT life in the periphery to light. Her Instagram page, which reached verified[60] status in August of 2019, consists of memes, promotional

[60] *Verified* is a social media designation that confirms your real identity. On Instagram, however, it is reserved for those whose accounts represent the "authentic presence of a notable figure, celebrity, or global

materials, modeling, activism, and other original content. While I intend to focus on one video from her page, it is worth mentioning that the periphery is visible throughout the content. From producing much of her content in her neighborhood to hosting a contest for Black LGBTT folks to participate as backup dancers in the "Quem Manda" music video, Nininha leverages her social media to uplift those around her. Similarly, her YouTube channel consists of full-length music videos and video blogs. Many drag queens use YouTube as a more robust platform for sharing their thoughts, ideas, and lives beyond their artistry (Gutmann et. al, 2019; Monk-Payton, 2017; Oliveira, 2016). In addition to serving as the main platform through which Nininha shares the visuals for her music, her YouTube channel also contains several video blogs where Nininha discusses her life as Digo and provides lifestyle tutorials (makeup, fashion, etc.). Though I have elected to focus on her artistry due to the chapter's attention to Black LGBTT cultural work, Nininha's existence is intrinsically linked to Digo's experiences as a Black gay man from Salvador's periphery. The tutorials and video diaries, therefore, are not a deviation from Nininha's persona, but rather an extension of it that holds us accountable to the cultural, affective, and sensual labor performed by Digo, Nininha, and other Black LGBTT figures of the periphery.

The final two sections of this chapter analyze the #InMyFeelingsChallenge and the music video for "Quem Manda" featuring Mulher Pepita (henceforth Pepita). In order to contextualize the #InMyFeelingsChallenge video, I briefly discuss how artists and their followers (who sometimes include other musicians) have used social media challenges to

brand" (Instagram 2020). This is measured through identity, originality of content, and other measures of social media authenticity.

boost the popularity of their songs or pages. I argue that Nininha uses the landscape and certain artifacts of low-income life to localize her iteration of the #InMyFeelingsChallenge in Salvador's periphery, presenting her followers with a multivalent performance of Black LGBTT identity in the process. In my analysis of "Quem Manda," I detail both the production process and the content of the video itself, reflecting on Nininha's collaborative reimagination of the Stonewall riots. The imagery, call for collaborators, and choreography all perform a connection with this critical moment in the LGBTQ+ rights movement in the United States, re-centering the importance of Black and Brown low-income people to queer liberation.

Public Transportation as a Space of Elaboration

On June 29, 2018, Aubrey Graham (popularly known as Drake) released his fifth studio album: Scorpion. Known for his sad songs lamenting the loss of ex-lovers, it was no surprise when the Canadian rapper named one of the 25 songs on the album *In My Feelings*, "an upbeat, club-mixed love letter to 'Kiki', 'KB' and the members of the City Girls…wondering if they still love him" (Genius 2018). *In My Feelings* is one of two popular songs on the album that sample New Orleans bounce, a genre of music that originated in the low-income housing projects of the city.[61] The song quickly rose in popularity, leading to the creation of the #InMyFeelingsChallenge, a social media dance craze that started when Instagram comedian, Shiggy, posted a video of his self-choreographed dance to the song. According to pop culture news media outlet, PopSugar,

[61] For a more in-depth exploration about the cultural and geographic importance of New Orleans Bounce music, see Miller 2012.

"more than 400,000 posts [had] populated with the #InMyFeelingsChallenge hashtag on Instagram" only a few weeks following the release of Shiggy's original video (Messina 2018). Like many of the social media challenges before it, the #InMyFeelingsChallenge was picked up by artists, actors, and comedians around the world who took the song and dance as a lighthearted opportunity to interact with their followers.

The premise of the challenge is simple: to reproduce Shiggy's original concept with slight creative deviations. While the original video did not include a car, for example, many of the #InMyFeelingsChallenge videos feature a person dancing as their friend films them from inside of a moving car, an addition to the choreography that references the opening lyrics of the song.[62] Nininha, however, takes this creative license a step further. In her interpretation of the #InMyFeelingsChallenge, Nininha is displayed exiting a public bus in the middle of a street. While the geolocation on the video does not describe where in Salvador the video takes place, we can infer from the narrow streets, fruit stands, street vendors, abandoned shopping carts, and outdoor bars with plastic chairs that Nininha is in the periphery. The video, which is only about 40 seconds long, shows Nininha doing the #InMyFeelingsChallenge choreography alongside the moving bus. About halfway through the video, as Nininha is completing the choreography, the bus starts to drive quickly away from her. Nininha, running frantically to catch up, gets a few more dance moves in before finally getting back onto the bus. In the caption for this Instagram post, Nininha stated the following: "*Yes everyone…I couldn't resist doing the #inmyfeelingschallenge*, *but only*

[62] Opening lyrics: *Kiki, do you love me? Are you riding?*

those who have a car can do [the challenge] in a car, I travel by bus, so that's where I'll do it…." (Nininha Problemática, July 27, 2018, translation mine).

In Salvador, the bus system is a space of elaboration. Spoken word, comedy sketches, and street vendors selling anything you can possibly imagine comprise some of the performative uses of public transportation that low-income folks partake in for their survival. From asking for permission to enter the bus to winning over their audience of fellow travelers, there exists an intricate choreography of negotiation that allows for the usage of public buses beyond transportation to and from designated locations. It is (un)imaginable, then, that Nininha is able to stop the routine functionality of the public transportation system in order to participate in a social media challenge. The act of using the bus to participate in the #InMyFeelingsChallenge is itself an assertion of her identity as a Black drag persona from the periphery. While Nininha could have leveraged her fame to find a car, she opted for a more authentic participation in the challenge that would speak to not only her experience, but also the lives of those low-income folks that her cultural work represents. Furthermore, the form of her participation subtly showcases the extent of her social capital within Salvador's periphery. It is a well-known fact amongst those who ride the bus in Salvador that, even if you are waiting at a designated bus stop, there are no guarantees that a bus will stop for you. A relatively empty bus stop, potentially erratic passengers waiting alongside you, and disgruntled bus drivers are all reasons why someone will likely be passed over. The fact that Nininha was able to not only stop, but use and control a public bus for her participation in the #InMyFeelingsChallenge signifies a level of social capital that exceeds that of the daily performances taking place on public

transportation. Even when the bus sped away from her, it is clear to the viewers that Nininha is in control of the scene; her exaggerated performance of catching up to the bus is clearly for comedic value, an explicit reference to the fact that the bus system in Salvador waits for no one except for those who know how to work the system to their advantage. The success of her participation, which garnered over two million views, provides even more evidence of the reverence and recognition of Nininha's Black LGBTT cultural work within Salvador and its periphery.

Nininha's participation in the #InMyFeelingsChallenge reveals a low-stakes transnational connection between Salvador and the United States. Using the bus in lieu of a car roots the challenge in a low-income Black setting, a space that, when we consider the origins of New Orleans bounce music, is more resonant with the spatial and sonic landscapes that the song conjures. In 40 seconds, Nininha unintentionally links her performance of Salvador's periphery to the song's performance of low-income space in New Orleans, suggesting once again that low-income Black space produces cultural forms (i.e. bounce music and pagode) through which Black LGBTT folks make and express themselves. While I am sure that Nininha's video is one of many #InMyFeelingsChallenge videos that center low-income Black space in their production, the translational work that her video represents, paired with her presence as a drag persona, expose a queer usage of the challenge, one that evinces not only the presence of low-income Black LGBTT folks, but positions them as innovators and cultural makers.

***Quem Manda é a Bicha*: Black (Trans)femme Resistance Across the Americas**

Almost two weeks before posting her rendition of the #InMyFeelingsChallenge, Nininha used her Instagram account to post an open call for dancers. The video accompanying the call showcases Lucas Montty, a professional dancer from Salvador, and Digo providing a tutorial of the choreography for the music video. The call itself invites LGBTQIA+ folks over 18 years of age who live in the Salvador metropolitan region to participate in the Quem Manda music video with Nininha and Pepita, a trans funk artist from Rio de Janeiro. While the call for dancers itself does not provide the desired racial demographics, it is clear from the final selection video that Nininha intended to center the cultural, affective, and sensual labor of Black (trans)femmes (bichas pretas) in the video. About three weeks after the open call, Nininha posted on Instagram to announce the group of dancers selected for the music video. Performing the audition choreography, Digo is positioned front and center in the video clip accompanying the post, surrounded by a group of Black (trans)femmes located at his sides and on the elevated stage behind him. While there are some non-Black participants amongst the dancers, their positioning mostly at the back and the far sides of the video clip physically and epistemologically centers Black (trans)femmes within the production of this clip.

The music video itself is an homage to Black (trans)femme resistance, connecting the Stonewall riots to the contemporary Brazilian struggle for racial-gendered-sexual freedom. The video description on YouTube summarizes the plot and intentions of the video:

> *Nininha Problemática recounts the historic incident at Stonewall, a nightclub that was invaded by the police in New York in 1969. The event escalated to the point of*

> *rebellion, turning into the LGBT+ rights movement we know today. And on the 50th anniversary of this event, [this video shows] Nininha and Pepita undergoing a police raid after a Bolsonaro supporter reported them, uniting forces in order to shout that in this space, femmes are in control!*[63] (Nininha Problemática, 2019, translation mine)

While the plot itself makes explicit references to the Stonewall riots, a deeper exploration of the symbols, movements, and personas reveal the attention to Black (trans)femme activism and the hope it poses for racial equity, gender inclusivity, and sexual liberation for Black people across the Americas. The description makes an audacious, yet poignant connection between the Stonewall riots and the present-day fight for LGBTT liberation in the wake of Brazil's conservative political turn, evoking a cultural memory in which Black and Brown (trans)femmes are protagonists in the fight for social equality. In doing so, Nininha presents Quem Manda as both an homage to this historic moment of resistance and a recognition of the cultural, affective, and sensual labor of Black (trans)femme Brazilians of the past, present, and future.

The most readily accessible images that situate the video in a fictitious Stonewall Inn are the club's signage and the homage to Marsha P. Johnson, one of the leaders of the Stonewall riots. While the video was filmed at Club Bahnhof, a nightclub in Rio Vermelho that often hosts *Batekoo* and other Black LGBTT parties, Nininha and her team were able to change the signage to read "The Stonewall Inn" in glowing red lettering, a logo

[63] Original: Nininha Problemática remonta o episódio histórico de Stonewall, uma casa noturna que foi invadida pela polícia de Nova York em 1969. O evento tomou proporções tamanhas que virou rebelião e se tornou o movimento de libertação LGBT+ que conhecemos hoje. E no aniversário de 50 anos do acontecido Nininha e Pepita sofrem a invasão de um grupo de policiais após a denúncia de uma bolsominion e reúnem forças para gritar que nesse espaço QUEM MANDA É A BIXA!

reminiscent of the signage that advertises the bar in the present day. About halfway through the video, after Pepita's verse, the camera switches to a Black trans woman sitting on a couch with a chandelier in the background. Played by Vanusa Alves, a trans woman from Salvador, this figure is wearing a crown of red and white flowers, an image that has become emblematic of Marsha P. Johnson's life and legacy. Both of these images work to connect the performance to the moment of the Stonewall riots by providing intelligible symbols that position us within the space and time of the event.

The choreography also continues the work of connecting the Stonewall riots to the Brazilian struggle for sexual and gender liberation by linking Black LGBTT aesthetic practices in Brazil and the United States. While the Stonewall riots are not explicitly connected to the burgeoning ballroom community of New York City, Nininha and her team included voguing within the choreography for the music video, incorporating what they know about Black and Brown LGBT+ life in 1960s New York City in their homage to the moment of resistance and the specific communities that made it possible. That said, the voguing is a rather brief moment in the choreography. As with the Dois de Julho fanfarras that open Chapter Two, the remainder of the choreography brings together a variety of feminine gestures that, paired with the flamboyant attire worn by Nininha, Pepita, and the background dancers, are easily legible as fechação. When contextualized by the predominance of Black LGBTT people in the video, it becomes clear that Quem Manda is rooted in Black (trans)femme aesthetics and gestures (see figure 3.2).

Nininha's incorporation of contemporary trans Brazilian icons within the music video further bridges the temporal gap between trans activism past and present. In addition

to featuring Pepita and Vanusa, the video contains appearances from Léo Kret do Brasil, a trans funk artist originally from Salvador, and Miguella Magnata, a drag persona and pagode artist from Salvador. Excluding Vanusa, all of these featured artists have collaborated with Nininha on earlier music productions. While I am not at liberty to say whether or not Pepita, Léo Kret, and Miguella self-identify as Black, their inclusion in the video is significant in that they have all leveraged their careers to fight for LGBTT rights in Brazil. In her inclusion of these figures and key collaborators, Nininha presents the audience with a fragment of this generation's (trans)femme leaders, folks who, like Fabety Boca de Motor, have radically and critically embodied their gender and sexual identities.

Quem Manda, like the #InMyFeelingsChallenge, presents an alternative racial-gendered-sexual geography of the city, one that centers the labors of Black (trans)femmes in making cultural space within the city. While the video itself is neither filmed in nor visually representative of the periphery, the tribute to Stonewall and the bodies chosen to participate in the video suggest that, despite the violent structuring of state sanctioned LBGTT space, low-income Black LGBTT people have always played a hand in producing those spaces. To claim the periphery as a space of elaboration and possibility for Black LGBTT Bahians is to understand how their experiments in gender and sexuality inform the sonic and aesthetic landscapes of the rest of the city. Even with the limited presence of low-income Black LGBTT Bahians in Rio Vermelho's nightclubs, for example, their clothing, music, and gestures inundate the nightscape. Quem Manda holds us accountable to the appropriation and regulation of Black LGBTT joy within Salvador, reminding us that even in their absence or designation as minor figures, Black (trans)femmes dictate the

desires, tastes, and aspirations of those around them. Through the intentionality of her artistry, Nininha assembles a portrait of Black LGBTT life that uplifts the people and culture of Salvador's periphery, suggesting that what we know of Black LGBTT Bahian life is largely informed by the practices of gender and sexuality happening in those spaces.

BLACK LGBTT BAHIAN FUTURES IN THE HERE AND NOW

Nininha Problemática is one of many Black LGBTT Bahian artists, innovators, and activists who are working towards a less oppressive future for themselves and those around them. From Fabety and Thaís, who leverage their notoriety to carry out community-based work, to Coletivo das Liliths, who turn the stage into a microcosm of Salvador told from the perspective of a Black travesti, to Rayane, who embodies and manifests her pain in a neighborhood that works so hard to suppress it, Black LGBTT Bahians are making themselves and creating culture in beautiful ways. There are those Black LGBTT folk, too, whose names I do not know but exist in and utilize the city in beautiful ways: reimagining elite spaces through art and dance, hosting celebrations in the narrow alleyways of the periphery, and taking to the streets of the historic center in radical affirmation of their identities. These minor figures are, as Hartman states, a part of a chorus of Black LGBTT folks that work to envision a "time and place better than here" (2019, p. 349).

This future is being practiced in the here and now; their moments of protest, mourning, and joy all build towards a time and place in which Black LGBTT folks are cared for beyond their ability to feed the affective and sexual economies of the city. Part of this work is creating physical space in which Black LGBTT people can gather in peace,

outside of the elite structures of state-sanctioned LGBTT space, away from the consumptive gaze of tourists, non-Black LGBTT folks, and heterosexual men who desire their bodies. Paulilo Paredão, a street party that rotates between neighborhoods within Salvador's periphery, is one effort to bring Black LGBTT folks together in public. Drawing from a variety of Black musical forms developed in low-income Brazilian neighborhoods (pagode, brega, funk, etc.), Paulilo Paredão is a paredão[64] exclusively created for LGBTT people. By producing a LGBTT space within the periphery that draws on Black cultural forms, the Paulilo Paredão team is pouring the cultural labors of Black LGBTT Bahians back into the community itself, sharing their music, dances, and aesthetic in the company of one another.

The cultural work, narratives, and events analyzed in this project provide both a word of caution and a hope for our future. The word of caution is that, despite the meaningful work being done within the Black LGBTT Bahian community, the threat of anti-Black and anti-LGBTT violence loom throughout. The empowering and intentional work practiced by the individuals and organizations throughout the chapters do not elide the physical, psychological, and emotional abuse that has often fueled the creation of this work. Until proper protections, whether legal or extralegal, are put in place and enforced, Brazil will continue to be one of the most unsafe places for LGBTT people in the world. The hope for our future is that Black LGBTT Bahians are making monumental

[64] A *paredão* is a street party where someone plays music from the trunk of their car. While not always the case, the paredão is generally associated with low-income Black men and drug traffickers. The significance of Paulilo Paredão, therefore, is their appropriation of a masculine cultural form for the pleasure of LGBTT folks.

sociopolitical gains in spite of these threats. From Black trans women working in local and city government to disseminating legal advice on Black and LGBTT rights via social media, Black LGBTT individuals and organizations are fighting for the right to be themselves in every aspect of their lives. By valuing this work, and the people throughout the African diaspora whose lives depend on it, we move closer to a culture of humanness, racial equality, gender inclusivity, and sexual freedom.

Appendix C

3.1 Fabety Boca de Motor presenting his song on MTV Brasil (MTV, 2012)

3.2 Promotional materials for Quem Manda, with Nininha (left) and Pepita (right) (Nininha Problemática, Instagram 2019)

Epilogue – (Trans)mobility and the (Re)Making of Black Queer and Trans Worlds

In January of 2019, Rayane posted a photograph of herself that was geolocated in Germany. Initially, I did not think much of it, as it is common for people on social media to geolocate their photos in different countries and non-existent places. However, after looking at her Instagram story filled with videos of snow-covered European architecture, I realized that she was, in fact, living in Germany. My mind immediately went to the worst possible places: sex trafficking, pyramid schemes, abusive boyfriends, and other unfortunate circumstances that take the lives of many trans and travesti women who move from Brazil to Europe. Worse still was that, during our interview the previous year, Rayane explicitly stated that she never wanted to be a sex worker. The fact that she had given no prior notice of her travels, and that all of her Brazilian friends seemed as surprised as I was, produced an anxiety around my friend's move that only existed because of internalized biases around her race, gender, and sexuality; women like her were not meant to travel, and when they did it was almost always a death sentence.

Over the next few months, we shared limited interactions over social media. Rayane eventually revealed that she was hired as a cryptocurrency investor, helping folks purchase bitcoins and other forms of digital exchange. While cryptocurrency is a relatively new, risky market to be involved in, I found comfort in knowing that Rayane was in Germany on her own accord, supporting herself, and finding a path beyond that which was expected of her. While we missed seeing each other in person when she returned to Salvador briefly at the end of 2019, it was beautiful to see her practicing freedom through her travels, traversing borders that she was never meant to cross. As with the differential visions of transnational migration that Williams parses out in her monograph, Rayane's move to Germany "raises interesting questions about the possibilities of transnational mobility for

socially disadvantaged Brazilian women," as well as Black queer and trans folks throughout the diaspora whose border crossings cause moral panic (2013, 142).

A geography of desire not only evinces the social anxieties surrounding Black queer and trans spatiality, but also the fascist notion that national belonging, mobility, and the right to life are somehow biologically determinable. In this way, the conceptual intervention of this project is as much about Black queer and trans folk knowing each other across time and space as it is about citizenship and colonial legacies. To understand that desire regulates the local, national, and international movements of non-normative bodies is to attend to the ways that survival and freedom are often attached to the performance of normalcy (read: cisgender, heterosexual, White, etc.). It is under these conditions that, for example, Black, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern folks are submitted to extra screening at immigration when they travel internationally. Similarly, transgender and travesti individuals that do not possess personal identification matching their genders are often unable to even make it past airport security. While inclusivity measures in immigration and travel policies will ameliorate some of these issues, there is a fundamental ideological shift that needs to happen in order for migration and interconnection to be a realizable goal for Black queer and trans folks across the diaspora.

My worries around Rayane's move to Germany gestures towards one of those shifts. In spite of what *can* (and does) happen to Black trans and travesti Brazilians who move abroad, it needs to become imaginable that they can travel safely, securely, and with the same intentions as any other person. Rather than assuming their participation in sex work, or their exploitation under sex trafficking, scholars and activists of Black, queer, and trans liberation need to work towards tangible social change that will allow for this vision of mobility to become a reality. From those of us with social capital leveraging our transnational networks to care for our chosen families, to those of us advocating on the

front lines for preventative work and social policy, a future where Black queer and trans folks can expand their geographic possibilities is near. While we can never control the behaviors of those that seek to harm us, we are capable of constructing tangible transnational networks of care through which we distribute information and resources.

Some of this work already exists in the present: collective housing spaces designated for Black and/or LGBTQ+ persons, free gender-inclusive healthcare services, and WhatsApp groups for trans women and travestis to share information about potential predators all represent physical and digital care networks that protect Black queer and trans people from physical, emotional, and psychological harm. While these may appear to be localized, furtive practices in survival, social media and the appropriation of institutional resources have allowed for these networks to extend beyond national borders. As with the work presented here, queer and trans people across the African diaspora are sharing and translating their scholarly, activist, and artistic work so that we may know one another in the absence of accessible travel networks. Furthermore, many Black (trans)feminist and queer Brazilianist scholars appropriate institutional resources in order to fortify these transnational connections. Co-writing grant proposals in support of community organizations and inviting speakers to our universities from these communities are just some of the labors that we engage in to extend our support beyond the page. To be a scholar of Black gender and sexuality committed to transnational solidarity is to realize that the work is always in progress, that "queerness is not yet here" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1) and will only arrive if we continue to radically invest in one another.

Love, care, and community are the tools we have leveraged, and must continue to leverage, for queer and trans liberation across the African diaspora. Through Xica, Rayane, Thaís, Fabety, and Nininha, we see that the past and present not only inform the future, but are contemporaneous; our resonant practices in embodiment, survival, and futurity across

space-time bridge the gaps of a history that was never meant to be told. Creating, dancing, laughing, traveling, and resisting with one another unmakes the oppressive worlds that "we did not make but are told to carry," (Crawley, 2017) building new ones in their stead. While many of us may never see the day when Black queer and trans folks are able to move and love freely, we sustain ourselves through our strivings for that time and place. Those strivings, paired with the sociopolitical work necessary to keep us alive in the here and now, are the blueprint towards alternatives geographies of Black queer and trans existence.

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